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NEW ENGLAND'S INDEPENDENCE.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

O Land of Thought! it is not thine to quail
  Before Thought's questioning: not thine to start
In dastard fear if some truth-cradled gale
  Sweeps fearless o'er Earth's eldest shrines of Art,
And creeds that saw through centuries the heart
Of continents adoringly their own
  In gorgeous temple or resounding mart:
Yes, thou wouldst bravely smile to stand alone
And hear the thunder-crash of hoary fane and throne!

O, is it not far grander thus to be
  The brave, the just, the reverent, than to cower
Before new dawns on Truth's majestic sea?
  Let coward night-hawks wing the darkling hour,
  And fly at morning to their sunless bower—
But, Bird of Heaven! hail thou the Orient-Sire
  From thy lit home on Adirondac's tower,
Or, screaming challenge to the tempest's ire,
Perch on the Thunder's arm and dare his volleying fire.

Clime of the dauntless sword and fearless mind!
  'Tis thine to breathe the soul's heroic air:
I see thy banners on the troubled wind
  Indignant flout the clouds of Error there;
  I see thee, with thy breast and forehead bare,
Scaling the crags of God that joy to feel
  The feet of men from Superstition's lair:
Around the mountain tempests vainly wheel—
Yet shalt thou take the hight and win the crowning seal!

ALARIC;

OR,

THE TYRANT'S VAULT.

A SICILIAN STORY OF EARLY TIMES.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

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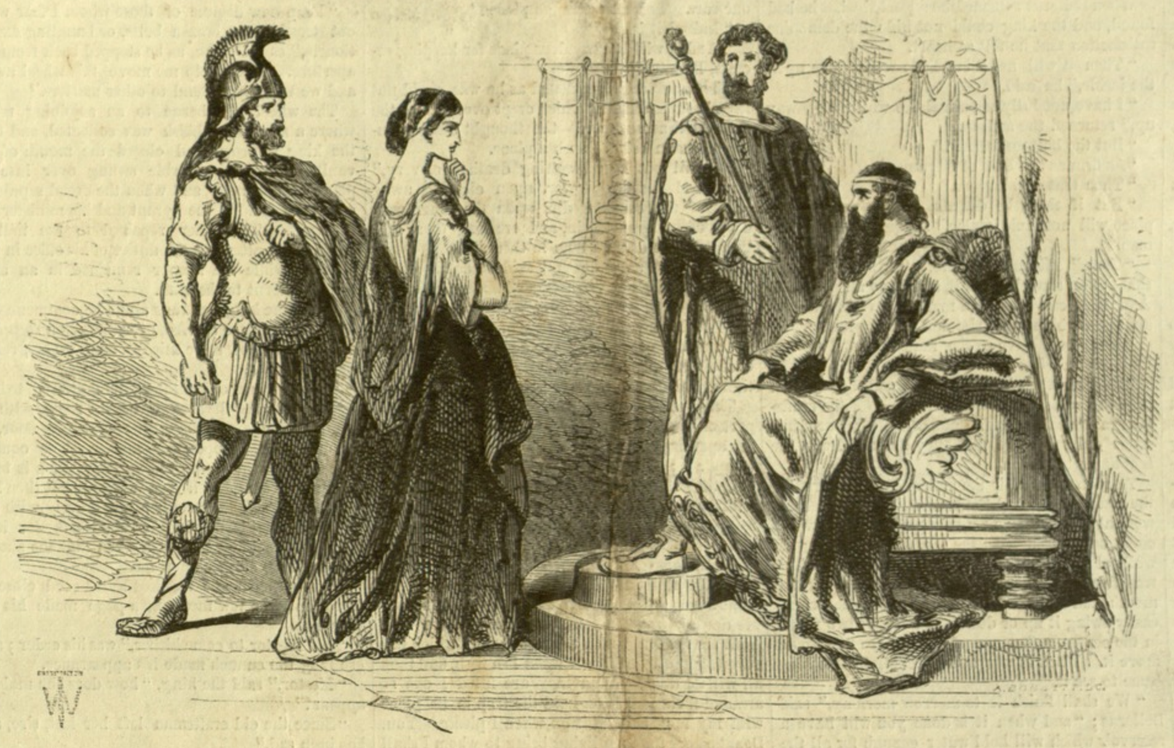

IANTHE BEFORE THE TYRANT.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING HAS A STARTLING REVELATION.

When Ianthe was left alone she barred the door, and returned to the apartment where she had met her lover. At first she was under no apprehension, but as she sat there alone, in the depth of the night, strange thoughts came into her mind, and unpleasant phantoms began to flit before her imagination. Love is a powerful agent towards giving to the soul unrest. It quickens all the emotions, and, if fears have been lurking in hidden places, its penetrating beams will most surely drive them out, either to dispose of them forever, or to give them new power and strength. The maiden had long known that there was some mystery connected with, and enveloping, her life-story. She knew that Bellerus had some potent reason for keeping her secluded, and that it was all for her own welfare. She had often pondered upon the subject, and as often given it up, and given it up, too, without vexation; for she was assured that nothing was hidden from her that could benefit her in the knowing of it. But now she wished she knew more. The danger which threatened Alaric might have some mystic relation to herself—she felt sure of it—she had heard enough to satisfy her on that point. And so, as her heart had been raised to bright hopes by the beaming of the renewed and quickened love upon it, did it sink, as she sat alone in the dreary midnight, and dwelt upon the unseen dangers that hovered about her.

The minutes passed away—she watched the hour-glass, and the sands were running down swiftly—and yet she was alone. A dark spell was upon her—a spell of doubt and gloom—which had come unbidden, and which she could not drive off. She tried to think of Alaric as safe, and that he would soon take her away to a peaceful, happy home of his own, but with every forced thought the phantom would come in, and when she might have felt a joy in the calling up of a picture such as hope would paint in the future, the emotion grew faint at its birth, and the unwelcome fear came instead.

And had she not cause for fear? Had not her father Bellerus taught her that it was not safe for her to mingle in society, as other maidens of her age did? Had he not always been fearful of her himself, and even trembled with apprehension upon the most trivial occasions? Had he not always shaken his head mysteriously when she would ask him why he feared thus, and simply answered that he could not tell? And had he not always, when forced to speak of her marriage, treated the subject as though something more than life or death might hang upon it? He had done all this, and he had done more. He had vaguely shadowed forth the idea that in her very birth a life of danger and trouble became her inheritance.

And so the fear-phantoms gathered about her. Darkly they settled down upon her soul, till the last ray of light was shut out, and the last hope fainted away.

At length there came the sound of heavy feet echoing through the house, and Ianthe started up from her seat. Presently a loud knock was given upon the door, and she went into the vestibule.

"Who is there?" she asked, hoping that it might be her father, but yet dreading to hear the answer.

"The royal guard!" was the response. "Open the door, and admit us!"

"But my father will return very soon, and then he will admit you."

"A plague upon thy father! We come in the king's name, and demand immediate entrance to this house!"

"But in a few moments he will come."

"And in a few moments we'll pull these old walls down about thine ears. By the sacred altar of Diana, thou hadst better open quickly!"

"What seek ye?" asked the maiden, trembling at every joint.

"We seek to search the house. But we want no more words. Open, or we break our way in, and then the worse fate may be thine."

A thundering blow upon the door with what appeared to be a large stone, brought Ianthe to a decision. She saw that they would quickly force their way in, so she removed the bar, and gave them entrance, and, as they came in, she retreated to the inner apartment, whither she was quickly followed by four stout soldiers, one of them being an officer of low degree.

"Are you alone in the house?" asked the leader of the party, after he had cast his eyes about the place.

"I am," replied Ianthe.

"Has not a youth named Alaric been here?"

The maiden hesitated, but she remembered the words of her father, and answered—

"He has been here, but is now gone."

"Ha—and whither went he?"

"I do not know."

"Lie not to us."

"I tell thee, I know not."

"How long since he went?"

"Not many minutes—not half an hour."

"And he will return here?"

"No. He fled from here because he knew there would be danger here."

"By the tongue of Echo, but thou art seeming-honest in thy speech," said the officer, gazing into her face.

"I tell but the truth, sir."

"'Twould be a pity if such marvelous beauty as thine were tainted by falsehood. But we'll search the house, nevertheless."

Another lamp was procured, and while one of the soldiers was left to keep watch upon the maiden, the other three started off to look over the dwelling. They ransacked every hole and corner they could find, but met with nothing to reward them for their trouble, and finally they returned to the apartment where they had left their companion.

"We can do no more," said the leader. "We must take the girl along, and let the lieutenant do the rest."

"But you will not take me," cried Ianthe, in alarm.

"We must, beauty, so don't fret about it."

The maiden plead and prayed, but all to no purpose. The soldiers had come with their orders, and they knew nothing beyond them. She might as well have urged reason upon the tempest. When she found that she must go, she procured a light silken mantle, which she threw over her head, and then informed the men that she was ready. The lights were extinguished, and the officer then led the way from the house, taking the fair prisoner under his own charge.

If Ianthe had been oppressed with fear before, she was much more oppressed now, for the phantoms began to take more tangible shape. The thought of seeing the king filled her with terror, though she could give to herself no clear reason why it should be so. She only knew that she had always held a deep dread of the monarch, and that Bellerus had never sought to divest her of it, but that he had rather helped her to retain the emotion. However, she could not now turn aside from her fate, and she strove to compose herself so that no perturbation of her own should work against her.

The officer was as respectful as one so rough and hardened could be, and Ianthe was conducted along through the still, dark, deserted streets in silence, till they reached the royal palace.

The king had not yet retired. He and his chamberlain had been conversing upon the events of the past and the present, and a fear of gigantic proportions had entered their minds, though they hoped, by summary proceedings, to meet whatever danger might come, and put it successfully down.

Yet they could not sleep until they had heard from the escaped prisoner, for upon him rested a wondrous degree of importance.

Pyrrho was leaning back in his seat, with his eyes closed, when a page entered and informed him that a party of soldiers had returned from their mission, and that their leader desired admittance.

"Is it Fingal?" demanded the king, starting up.

"No, sire. It is an under officer."

"Admit him."

The page withdrew, and presently the soldier came in.

"How now, guardsman—what news bring ye?"

"I, in company with three others, have been to the house of Bellerus, the craftsman, but we found not the prisoner there, nor any male inhabitant."

"And where is my lieutenant?"

"He went in another direction, sire. He thought it very probable that the prisoner, even if he had been at Bellerus's house, would not remain there, so he sent us on, while he, with three of his best men, took another route, by which he hoped he might cut the fugitive off if he were attempting to escape towards the gate of the temple."

"It was a good thought. And you have not seen him since?"

"No, sire. But I found a maiden at the house of Bellerus—she was the sole occupant—and I have brought her with me."

"Ha! Is she beautiful?" cried Pyrrho.

"The most beautiful female I ever saw," answered the soldier with enthusiasm.

"Then we have the lady of Alaric's love. Bring her hither at once."

The man withdrew, and the monarch turned to his chamberlain.

"Now, Donatus, we shall see this rare flower which the old craftsman has kept hidden so long, and if there be any mystery about her, we will have it solved."

"I cannot imagine what mystery there can be," returned the chamberlain. "But—here she comes."

At that moment Ianthe was led into the room, and she stood before the monarch with her head bowed, and the light mantle shading her face. Pyrrho gazed with eager admiration upon the faultless form, and he watched her motions with the eye of one who had some judgment upon the external points of female beauty.

"What is thy name?" he asked, as she stopped before him.

"Ianthe," she answered, in a low, tremulous voice, but not more tremulous than might have been the voice of any maiden who found herself for the first time in the presence of royalty.

"Art thou the daughter of Bellerus?"

"I am, sire."

"And thou knowest the youth, Alaric?"

"I do, sire."

"And dost know where he is now?"

"I do not."

"Beware, maiden. We have means of knowing the truth."

"I have spoken only the truth, sire."

"Where is thy father?"

"I know not."

"Sire," spoke the officer who had brought her, "she confessed to me that her father had gone away with this Alaric."

"Ha! Is this so, maiden?"

"It is."

"And yet thou said'st thou had'st no knowledge of where Alaric might be."

"Nor have I, sire. Whither they went I know not. They would neither allow me to accompany them, nor to know their destination."

"Show me thy face, and let me judge whether thou speakest the truth."

Ianthe raised her head, and as the mantle fell back, the beams from one of the clusters of lamps shone full upon her. The king gazed into her beautiful features, and an exclamation of surprise broke from his lips; but his admiration of her loveliness was quickly overcome by another emotion. As he continued to gaze a sudden start was perceptible in his frame; and, after a moment of seeming doubt, he turned pale as death.

"Did'st say thou wert the craftsman's daughter?" he whispered, as though the question were forced involuntarily from him.

"I said so," replied the maiden, trembling as she spoke.

At this point Donatus, who had seen the strange perturbation of his master, ordered the soldier to retire; and then he moved to where he could gain a fair view of Ianthe's features. He looked upon them, and in a moment he, too, became moved by an unaccountable tremor. The king composed himself as quickly as he could, and then touched a silken rope that hung near him, upon which a black eunuch entered the apartment.

"Mestor," said the monarch, addressing the sable attendant, who was a gigantic fellow, "take this maiden to the women's quarters, and be thou answerable for her safety with thy life." Then turning to Ianthe, he added—

"Until I can see thy father I shall detain thee here; but fear not, for thou shalt be well cared for."

"Sire," cried the frightened girl, as the gigantic eunuch approached her, "I have done no wrong! Oh, let me return to my home!"

"It may not be, lady. But I have assured thee that thou shalt be set free as soon as I have seen thy father."

"And will you do harm to him? Oh, king, he has meant no evil."

"I will not harm a hair of his head. Let this assurance give thee comfort."

While speaking Pyrrho had beckoned to Mestor, and as the latter approached him he whispered:

"No living soul is to see her until I see thee again!" Then he added, in a louder key—"Conduct her to an apartment fitting the guest of a king."

Ianthe shrank away with a fearful shudder as the black approached her, for she saw that he was of stern aspect, and of terrible look; but she dared not resist, nor would she make another appeal to the king, so she suffered herself to be led from the apartment.

"Now, by the gods!" cried the king, leaping down from his throne, and striding across the floor, "I see the solution of this volcanic problem. Donatus, did'st see her face?"

"Aye, sire."

"And did you ever see one like it before?"

"Yes—most assuredly."

"Years ago?"

"Yes."

"And did you think the lion had left a whelp behind?"

"I have always mistrusted that such might be the case, sire."

"Then why have you not told me so?"

"Because I was not sure, and I would not burden thee with needless alarm. But I am sure now. Were Jupiter himself to tell me that this maiden was the child of that man, I should feel no more sure than I do now."

"Nor should I," responded the king. "I knew her the moment I gazed into her face. Aha—I was safe enough in promising her that her *father* should not be injured. But we can see something of the danger which has been over us. Ye gods! it is surpassing strange that she could have been kept so long in our city, and yet kept so safely. That Bellerus is a shrewd fellow. But, thank the kind powers that sustain me, we have her safe enough now."

Pyrrho took another turn across the room, and then added, with a sudden clap of the hands—

"Can you realize all the importance of this occurence?"

"What mean you, sire?"

"I mean—do you fully comprehend what a wondrous fortune has befallen us in the finding of this maiden?"

"Aye—most surely do I, sire. Of course you will keep her close, now that she is in your power."

"Keep her close! By the scepter of Sicily, I think I will! She shall not live to see another sun! I should feel my throne on a foundation of quicksand while she lived!"

"Sire," spoke the chamberlain, after a few moments' reflection, "perhaps, upon consideration, thou might'st find another fate for her."

"Ha!"

"Do you not think so, sire?"

"Speak plainly."

"Make her thine! Give to her all thou fearest others might claim for her, and yet keep thy scepter."

"By the life within me, Donatus, but thou dost give me a new thought. I'll think of that. Ha—who comes here?"

It was Hippon, entering in haste.

"Sire," he cried, "the very Fates and Furies are sent down upon Syracuse!"

"What is it, Hippon? Out with it. We are prepared for wondrous things now."

"Thy lieutenant, Fingal, with three of his best men, is slain!"

"How? Where?"

"At the entrance of the street of Diana's Fountain."

"And the three men slain, too?"

"Yes, sire."

"All dead?"

"Yes."

"And who has done it?"

"Must it not have been Alaric?"

"Now by the o'ertopping heavens!" exclaimed the monarch, clasping his hands together, and starting across the floor, "this is exceeding all belief! Nothing has been found of the youth?"

"No, sire."

"And thus must a king submit! But it shall not be for long! Hippon, send my captain hither."

In a few moments the captain made his appearance.

"Claudian," spoke the monarch, "upon thy life I charge thee, bring me that youth Alaric. Thou hast men enough to cover the city; and thou should'st have wit enough to find anything that breathes upon the island. Go find him, and bring him to me, dead or alive. All power is thine. Now go."

When the captain was gone the monarch turned to his chamberlain.

"One bird is caged. Let Claudian capture another. And now for this craftsman, Bellerus. I'll have him in a way of my own. Breathe not a word of the suspicion we hold against him."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TYRANT'S VAULT.

On the morning following the events last recorded the king rose from an unrefreshing slumber, and called his captain to him in his closet. Claudian had not yet slept, but had been at work without ceasing. Pyrrho wished to know how the matter stood concerning the youth, Alaric.

"I have satisfied myself upon two points," said the captain, in his report, "First—Alaric has not left the city; of this I am sure. He is within our walls somewhere. Second—His presence is not known in any quarter. I think the old artisan, Bellerus, and, perhaps, one or two of his immediate companions, alone know that he has been in Sicily since he fled, eight years ago. I have placed four hundred soldiers upon the watch. Every avenue in the city is under strict oversight, and he cannot make his appearance in a public street without being immediately recognized; for I have caused my men to be so arranged that each one is placed in that quarter where he knows all the inhabitants; so that a stranger, no matter of what degree, will be at once marked and overhauled. Thus no amount of disguise can save him from the Arguses I have set upon the watch, if he ventured forth."

"So far so good," returned the king, thoughtfully. "But have you set any guard upon the passes without the city?"

"No, sire. I had not thought it necessary."

"If you deem that any precaution within your power is unnecessary, then you do not comprehend the full risk we have at stake. Let every road, and path, and hedge upon the coast, and towards the mountains be also guarded. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sire."

"For," pursued the king, "there is no knowing what may happen. You feel sure that the fugitive cannot leave the city. Suppose I had told you that he could have left my dungeon, all unarmed, while three bold executioners stood before him with drawn swords in their powerful grasps, you would have smiled at my folly. Yet he did it. And see how he has met stout Fingal and his stalwart men. I tell thee every possible thing must be done. Thou wilt see that trusty men are sent off without the city at once."

"Yes, sire."

"And now, Captain, I wish to ask thee concerning one other matter: I have heard that in Egpyt, in Athens, and in Jerusalem of Judea, there are certain craftsmen who are bound to each other by mystic ties. They are mostly the workmen in various departments of architecture; but artisans, and cunning artificers of all degrees, are eligible to the fraternity. Hast ever heard of such a thing?"

"Yes, sire.

"And have you ever heard the object of such an organization?"

"Aye—I have been told that it was for the purpose of preserving their art, and saving to themselves the advantages of their discoveries and im-

provements; and also for mutual relief and protection."

"And do you imagine that such a mystic fraternity has an existence in our city?"

Claudian was startled by the question.

"It may have," he said.

"Have you ever noticed anything that could lead your suspicions in that direction?"

"Nothing, sire. I only judge from reason. Many of the leading architects of our city are from far-off countries, and many of those who are native here have traveled in the East; so that it would not be strange if they had brought hither with them the mysteries of which you speak."

"Keep your eyes open, Claudian; and if we can find such a thing it shall be rooted out at once. And now I bid you attend well to the business I have given to your charge."

The captain bowed, and withdrew, and the king then sent for one of his messengers, who soon made his appearance.

"Do you know where the mason, called Bellerus, lives?" the monarch asked.

"Yes, sire."

"Then go to him, and bid him come hither. Say to him that the king would see him on a matter of business connected with the craft."

The messenger went away, and found the old artisan alone in his house. He gave to him the royal message, and without hesitation Bellerus arose to obey. He seemed to be laboring under some weighty affair of the mind, but there was a stern resolution apparent in his movements. He accompanied the messenger to the palace, and was at once admitted to the royal presence.

Pyrrho gazed sharply into the bronzed features of the craftsman, and turning to his chamberlain, he remarked, in an undertone,—

"There's bold, hard stuff in that fellow."

"Aye, sire,—and there be many more like him in our city."

"Thy name is Bellerus?" returned the king, turning to his visitor.

"It is, sire."

"And thou art master of thy craft?"

"I am an experienced mason."

"So I have heard; and I have sent for thee to have thee perform for me a piece of work in thy line. Can't thou do it?"

"First, sire," returned Bellerus, with a slight twitching of the muscles of the face, "I would ask thee if my child, Ianthe, is in this palace?"

"She is, good Bellerus; and she is perfectly safe," answered the king, with great seeming frankness. "I sent my guard, last night, after a prisoner who had escaped, and hearing that he had been at thy house, thither I sent. But he was not found there, and the maiden was alone. She said that the prisoner had been there, so my officer took the liberty to bring her away that I might question her. I should have sent her back to her home this morning, but I had determined to employ thee in the work of which I have spoken, so I thought she would be better here until you were ready to return to your home with her. She shall have every attention and comfort."

"Do you mean that I shall remain here until my work is finished?" the mason asked.

"Yes. I wish it done as soon as possible. I will show it to you, and then you can employ such help as you may judge you will need."

"If I remain here until the work is finished I may see my child during the intervals of refreshment?"

"Certainly."

"Then I will perform the task if I can."

The king bade the old craftsman to follow him; and then he led the way out from the throne-room, through a winding passage—then through several smaller apartments, to his private bath. Beyond here was a closet, which seemed to be in an angle of the structure, and within the base of one of the high towers. The ceiling was arched, and elaborately sculptured; the walls were of cinnamon-stone, very highly polished; and the floor was a fine Mosaic pavement, with the representation of a chariot-race cleverly wrought out by the proper arrangement of the various colored bits of stone. But this floor was not whole. Near the center was an aperture, some ten feet in diameter, which presented to the eye a seemingly bottomless pit. There was no finish about the edge, save a skirting of marble, flush with the floor; but the brink was abrupt, and only guarded by a few boards which had been thrown across.

"What think ye this hole was made for?" asked the king.

Bellerus gazed down into the broad pit, but he could only see a fathomless depth of gloom.

"I have no means of knowing," he answered. "This part of the palace is much older than the other parts, and this vault was probably constructed when the high tower was built. I could judge better by examining the interior, and sounding its depths."

"And how can ye do that?"

"When I have my men here I can do it easily."

"Well," pursued the king, walking around the vault, and gazing into its darkness, "I have taken an odd fancy. You know my bath is close by?"

"Yes."

"And I have thought to have this pit so tightened, with firm, flinty cement, that it will hold water; and then I will have it filled for the use of my bath."

"But, sire,—it would require a river to fill it to overflowing."

"I suppose there are men enough in Sicily to fill it, and keep it full?"

"Yes."

"Then it shall be done. The king does not stop before any obstacle which can be surmounted. How many men will you want?"

"I cannot tell, sire, for I know not yet the amount of work which must be done."

"But you can ascertain?"

"With the assistance of some of my fellows."

"Give me their names, and I will send for them."

Bellerus hesitated awhile, but finally he called over the names of four men who should be summoned. They were accordingly sent for, and when they arrived arrangements were at once made for sounding the depths of the vault, the king standing by to watch the operation. A heavy plummet was attached to the end of a long line, and lowered into the pit. Down, down, down, it went, and when it had reached the bottom there was found to have been let out a hundred and fifty cubits.

"It is an enormous depth," remarked one of the masons.

"A wondrous depth," responded the king. "And now I should like to know how it is constructed. Cannot one of you go down?"

Bellerus quickly made arrangements for exploring the cryptic place. A lighted torch was first sent down, and when it had descended to a considerable distance there was a loud report—a concussion—as though an earthquake had broken beneath the palace. The king was sore afraid; but when he saw that the craftsmen took the occurrence as a matter of course, he became calm. After this the torch was sent down again, and finally it went to the bottom burning, and as the workmen gazed down, it looked like a ghastly eye, or dim spark, in the far-off darkness. It reflected upon nothing, and revealed nothing.

Next Bellerus suffered himself to be lowered into the vault by his fellows, and as he descended he found that the space grew larger, until its diameter was not far from twenty cubits. He could see that the walls were of solid masonry, and he had no doubt, in his own mind, that the dismal place had been originally built for a dungeon—built by some king, or lord, who found this a convenient way in which to send those whom he wished to dispose of forever. It was a long, long way to the bottom, and when he reached it he found it covered by a thick, slimy mud. When he cried out his voice was only as a dim echo, the ponderous walls drinking up the sound; and when he gazed aloft he could distinguish a small speck of dull light. But he knew that no human voice could reach to that place from where he stood, and that even a clap of thunder might not stir the air to such a height. He went around with his torch and examined the walls, and he found them all firm and solid, the massive rocks, all hewn and squared, being laid in a cement which had become a part of the very stone to which it had adhered. No mortal power could move those stones—nor could mortal power, unaided from above, carve a way up from out that Tartarian depth.

When Bellerus returned he reported what he had found, and the king could not hide the demoniac satisfaction that he felt at heart.

"Then it will need but little work done upon the inside," he said.

"I have not fully examined the wall on the way up," returned the artisan.

"But the bottom is firm?"

"As firm as the base of Olympus."

"Then that will answer."

"But if there be defects on the way up, the place will not hold water," suggested the craftsman.

"True," returned Pyrrho. "I had forgotten that. You shall look to it, and have all prepared. And then can you fit a marble covering to this aperture, which I can rise and fall at pleasure?"

"Yes, sire. Give us the materials, and we will fix it as you wish."

The party then left the closet, and, by order of the king, apartments were furnished for the craftsmen in the palace, and the officers of the guard had strict orders to see that they did not leave the building.

As soon as possible the materials were carried to the tower-closet, and Bellerus and his four fellows went at work. They rigged swinging seats, which could be lowered from the top, for examining the walls of the vault; and from the marble which was furnished they fashioned a covering for the mouth, and hung it so nicely that one man could easily swing it up or down. It hung by two pivots in the center, and even a pressure of the foot would move it. When it was nearly completed the king came to see it.

"We shall finish it to-morrow morning," said Bellerus; "and when it is done you will have a reservoir which will hold water enough for all the fountains in Syracuse."

"I mean to have the most extensive bath in the world," cried the monarch.

When the day's work was done the old craftsman was permitted to go and see Ianthe, whom he found in a small, plainly furnished apartment, at one end of a dark corridor. He had seen her once before, and she had been quite contented after she knew that he was at work in the palace.

"We must not speak too loudly," said Bellerus, in a low tone; "for a guard is placed over us."

"A guard!" repeated the maiden, in surprise.

"Yes. A huge black eunuch is not far off. I have my eyes about me, and can see. However, we can talk without fear, if we are careful."

"But why are you so despondent in your tone?" the maiden asked, gazing anxiously into his face.

"I am not despondent, Ianthe."

"Yes, you are. Your voice and look are both sad and portentous."

"Well, well,—it may be a spell that has come over me. But let me say what I have to say. Our work will be finished to-morrow."

"And then we will go to our home," cried Ianthe, hopefully.

"I may go, but——"

"But what? Ah, father,—now I see that you were sad. You have some fear—some fear for me. Is it not so? Speak."

The old man gazed into the beautiful face before him, and finally he said,—

"I have reason to believe that you will not be suffered to depart when I go; but you must not fear for the result. I have more power than the monarch dreams of, and I will surely see that you are not harmed."

"But," cried the frightened girl, "if you are outside of the palace, and I am inside, how can you help me?"

"By a power which I cannot explain to you. Suffice it for me to assure you that I can help you. If you do not see me again here, be not alarmed. The king thinks I mistrust him not, but I can read his thoughts easily. I tell thee plainly, he does not mean that I shall see the again; but I have friends in the palace. Keep up a good heart, let come what will."

"And why is all this?" murmured the maiden, in a prayerful tone, taking one of the old man's hands in her own, and gazing up into his face. "Thou art not my father by blood."

"Thou knowest I am not, for I have so told thee."

"Then who am I?"

"All that thou now see'st thyself. I cannot tell thee more."

"But I only seek to know why the king should so treat me."

"If I give thee promise of safety from his power, why should that trouble thee?"

"O!—but I cannot feel the assurance of that safety. Suppose he should put thee to death!"

He cannot. As soon as my work is done, I shall slip away from the palace. I shall not dare to remain. But thou shalt be cared for."

In vain was it that Ianthe strove to gain some further knowledge of the strange circumstances of the past which were hidden from her, and which yet held so much influence in the present, beside casting dark shadows into the future. Bellerus would not speak, for he said he could not. His tongue was tied.

At length the old man arose to take his leave. He held the sweet girl by the hands, and spoke hopefully, but yet solemnly.

"Ianthe, in all that is to come be sustained by the assurance that it is the will of the gods. Aye, it is the will of a GOD whom this people know not. It is the will of the One Almighty—the great I AM! Thou canst not escape thy fate. Did it lay in the power of man to release thee from the ordeal through which thou must pass, I would have removed thee from the danger ere this. But be brave and hopeful, and in the end a crown of joy and peace shall be thine. And once more I tell thee thou hast many friends beside me. Should'st thou never behold me more they would serve thee all the same. So, Ianthe—my child, my beloved—look to thy crown of joy in the future, and bear all in the present with fortitude!"

He kissed her; and, overpowered by the wondrous emotions that came overwhelming upon her, she sank down and covered her face with her hands. But soon she started up again, and called the name of Bellerus. No answer! She was alone. She called again; the door was opened, and the eunuch appeared. She gazed for an instant into his horrible face, and then shrank away in terror, and buried her face in the soft cushion of her couch.

CHAPTER IX.

WITHIN THE VAULT—AND UPON ITS BRINK!

Early in the morning, before the craftsmen were astir, the monarch called his chamberlain, and they repaired to the closet where the work had been going on. The broad marble cover was up, and they looked down into the vault.

"What think you of it?" asked Pyrrho.

"Horrible!" whispered Donatus, shuddering as he gazed down into the Plutonian darkness, and felt the damp, chill air coming up.

"It is so deep," pursued the king, "that no sound could reach us from the bottom. Were there at this moment a hundred men down there, their united voices could not be made palpable to our ears. Is it not a strange place?"

"Indeed it is, sire."

"And it will be a wondrus place for keeping secrets, Donatus."

The chamberlain, hardened as he was, could not keep back the shudder which crept over him at the thought thus suggested—the thought of consigning a human being to such a place.

"It will not be a lingering death—not very," exclaimed the king; "for, upon clearing away some of the collected dirt upon the inner wall drops of water started in, and ere long there will be enough to drown a man in there."

"It will be a sure death," said Donatus, speaking more freely as he became habituated to the idea.

"All the power and cunning of earth could not get a man up from that dark depth when he was once there! I tell thee, Donatus, it is a wondrous thing. And see how I have had it fixed:"

Thus speaking, the monarch took hold of that part of the marble covering which swung up from the aperture, and, with a single effort, he threw it into place; and when it was done the floor of the closet seemed unbroken, the center-piece of marble looking not in the least out of character or harmony from being surrounded by the mosaic pavement.

"Now observe," pursued Pyrrho. "We can make this closet as dark as we please, and the moment a man is led upon yonder edge of this marble down he must go. The craftsmen have only to fit the brazen pins in their places, by which this covering can be held firm when I so wish, and then all will be done. When they are fitted I can so arrange them that I can hold the trap in its place with my foot, and let it go when I please. You, Donatus, are the only living being to whom I shall communicate this secret; and thus I shall hold complete power over the lives of those about me, even while they know it not. Thou wilt not breathe it?"

"Never, sire. But the workmen who have fashioned this trap?"

"Dost think they have not made their work strong enough to hold themselves? Ha, ha,—Bellerus has planned for escaping as soon as this is done. I overheard somewhat of their conversation, and I know their intent. The old artisan did not think I was near, and he let the whole plot out. They have contrived to learn the way to the court by the lower, private corridor, and they have also obtained false keys to some of my doors; and thus they mean to leave me as soon as possible. Oho—I heard their whole plan—'twas a good one—and they look for help, if need be, from some one within the palace,—but I've a plan of my own—one I have had from the first—and I'll give them a taste of the quality of a king's ingenuity. And to this end I want your assistance. Hence I have called you thus early that we might have a perfect understanding."

The chamberlain was ready to listen, and the plan was soon contrived, after which they withdrew to attend to other matters.

In due time Bellerus and his companions entered the closet and resumed their work, and by the middle of the afternoon it was all complete, though they had as yet made no report to that effect, nor did they intend to until it suited their convenience. But the king entered, however, while they were consulting, and he saw at once that they had no more to do, though he pretended not to notice it.

"Will you have it all finished to-night, good Bellerus?" he asked, in a most friendly and condescending manner.

"We shall try, sire," was the answer of the old artisan, while he cast a meaning glance upon his comrades.

"Very well," resumed Pyrrho, advancing to the brink and gazing over, "you may take your own time. But I must be very busy during the remainder of the evening, and I have come to satisfy myself upon one point. I think you said that water was oozing in from near the top of the vault."

"Yes, sire—probably from the drainage of your bath."

"Have you been down to see how much has run in since yesterday?"

"No."

"I wish you would do so now, then. You have the staging all rigged?"

"It is all handy, sire."

"Then will you not go down and examine? You, with two of your men to hold the torches, can descend, while the other two, with myself, remain here to attend the ropes."

Without further remark Bellerus proceeded to arrange the swinging staging, and when it had been suspended over the edge of the vault he called upon two of his men to come with him. They obeyed, and when they had taken their places they were carefully lowered, the rope being wound upon an axle of small diameter, to which was attached a wheel so large that one man could easily manage the weight of half-a-dozen suspended by the rope.

Down went the old craftsman and his two companions—slowly and steadily—down—down—and the king watched the unwinding rope with a nervous gaze.

"Hark!" he said, at the same time clapping his hands. "Did not Bellerus call to you?"

The two men at the wheel stopped and listened.

"Here—let me hold this where it is, and do you look down and ascertain what he wants."

The monarch caught the wheel as he spoke, and the two artisans advanced to the edge of the vault and looked over. At that moment the chamberlain, who had recognized the signal agreed upon, glided into the apartment without noise. In a moment more Pyrrho had let the wheel go, and, with a sudden movement, he pushed the craftsman nearest to him over the fearful brink, while Donatus, who had been on the alert, served the second man in like manner. The royal assassin bent his ear over the dark pit to listen, but the swift revolving of the wheel overcame all other sound. In a short time, however, the rope had all run off, and with a blow of his sword the king cut it loose, and let it go, after which he bent his ear again over the brink of the fearful pit. But all was silent as the grave down there. Once he fancied he heard the shriek of a dying man, but it was not repeated. The damp, deathly exhalation struggled up from the Tartarian abyss, but it bore with it no sound from those who had been consigned to the horrible prison.

"Now, Donatus," spoke the monarch, "the secret of this place, in its present use, rests with you and me alone. Let us guard our speech so that no other being shall know it and live."

"I will be guarded," replied the chamberlain, shaking off the horror which had crept in upon him. It was not a horror at seeing five men put to death; but it was from the terrible gloom which clung to the place. It seemed to bring him near to the infernal regions, and he almost imagined that he could hear the groans of Ixion and of Sisyphus, and of the wretches who fled the fiery flames. In short, Donatus had never been a brave man. He was a ready tool, and an adroit courtier, and thus had gained and maintained his position.

"I can now dispose of those whom I fear without trusting to brazen bolts, or bungling executioners," said Pyrrho, as he stepped back from the aperture. "Now help me move this wheel away, and we will then attend to other matters."

The wheel was borne to an adjoining room, where a mass of rubbish was collected, and then the king returned and closed the mouth of his vault. The heavy marble swung over into its place without noise, and when the dread sepulchre was thus hidden the tyrant and his minister left the spot. The latter repaired to the hall of audience to attend to the duties of his office in that quarter, while the former remained in an anteroom adjacent to the bath.

When the king was thus alone he commenced to pace nervously to and fro, ever and anon stopping, as some thought, more mighty than others, rested upon his mind.

"By the curse of Tantalus," he muttered, to himself, halting in the center of the room, with his hands folded, and his eye bent upon the floor, "I am in sore doubt upon this matter. The counsel of Donatus is good, providing the maiden is to be thus managed. But if she refuse—what then? I cannot feel safe to have her unwillingly with me. Her guardian is disposed of, and far better is it that she should follow him than that she should live to bring danger upon me."

Thus speaking he touched a bell-cord close at hand, and in a few moments a page made his appearance.

"Bid Mestor to come hither," was his order; and ere long the eunuch made his appearance.

"Mestor," said the king, "how does the maiden appear?"

"Since the old craftsman left her last, sire, she has been sad."

"What makes her so?"

"I cannot tell. She was in fair spirits while he came and went; but the cloud settled upon her last evening, and to-day she has found no comfort."

"Aye—I think I see," the king returned. "The old man must have told her his work would be finished to-day, and she thinks he will go away without her. You may bring her to me."

The eunuch bowed and withdrew, and Pyrrho appeared more nervous than before. He strode about the apartment for awhile, and then stopped again, with his hands folded, and his head bowed, as before.

"The way is plain enough," he muttered. "I would like her for a wife—and were she else than what she is I'd have her if Pluto himself said nay! But if she come not willingly to me, she must take the other course! If she passes quietly away from earth, all this trouble will be gone, and I shall breathe again. 'Tis easily done. 'Tis but a single motion—an effort of the will—a pressure of my foot—and she will be in the land of shadows! Surely the sepulchre I shall give her ought to warrant her passage over the dark and pestilential river."

At this point the door was opened, and Mestor entered, leading Ianthe by the hand. Pyrrho motioned for the eunuch to depart, and then he turned towards the maiden, who stood before him with her hands folded upon her bosom, and her eyes bent upon the floor. She did seem sad and melancholy, but she was beautiful—very beautiful. Her loveliness was almost celestial, and for the while the voluptuous monarch seemed transfixed by the presence.

"Lady," he finally said, assuming a kindly tone, "I have sent for thee that I might speak with all plainness and fullness of heart, and I trust that thou wilt listen to me, and give me all thy confidence."

She gazed up into the king's face, but her eyes quickly fell again, for she could not bear to look upon the features of one who had been so cruel, and whose hands were stained with so much blood. Ah! had she known the deed that last stained those hands!—But, in mercy, she did not.

"I shall speak plainly," pursued the king, "and you must have your thoughts ready. Suppose I were to offer you the crown of—QUEEN?"

Ianthe started, and tottered back.

"Suppose I were to offer you a seat upon the throne of Sicily?"

Again the maiden started, but this time the emotion was deeper and stronger.

"Will you not answer me?"

"Sire," she said, raising her eyes slowly to his face, "thou canst not be serious in this."

"I am serious, lady. I would make thee my queen. I speak in all seriousness, and after due deliberation. And I would have thee deliberate ere thou answerest."

"Thou hast one queen already, sire."

"I said that I would make thee my queen," the king answered, quickly. "If thou wilt accept the offer, thou shalt have the place, and nothing shall stand in thy way."

"It cannot be," the maiden said.

"But I tell thee—it can be! I know of what I speak."

"Sire, if thou wouldst do me a kindness, let me go to my father. Send me back to the home from whence I was taken."

"Thou art mistaken, lady, if thou thinkest I would do all this for thy sake alone. I love thee—Why dost thou start?"

"O! speak not so to me. Let me go."

"Not until we have a better understanding. I tell thee again—I love thee, and would make thee queen. Now wilt thou not accept my offer?"

"I cannot."

"Bethink thyself."

"I have thought enough, sire. It cannot be."

"I would not be harsh, fair lady, nor force thee to a conclusion; but I may say thus much in all sincerity: If thou wilt be my queen, all shall be well with thee, but if thou refusest, I may not have the power to save thee from a fearful fate."

The maiden was frightened now, for the memory of old fears came to harrass her, and she could not so well bear the new. She was very pale, and leaned against the marble wall for support.

"I would not threaten you," continued Pyrrho, as he saw how deeply moved she was. "I only speak the truth. The fates have decreed that thou shalt be my queen."

"No, no, no!" cried Ianthe, struggling with the deadly fear that was upon her, and in a measure overcoming it. "The fates have not so decreed."

"But I tell thee they have."

Again the maiden struggled with the fear-spirit, and gradually she overcame it—overcame it so far that she could control herself even in the presence of the base tyrant of Sicily.

"Sire," she said, and she seemed very calm as she spoke, "I cannot be what you have proposed."

"But suppose a worse fate were behind it?"

"There can be none worse on earth."

"Ha! Is that your mind?"

"It is."

"And you dare to speak your hate?"

"I have not spoken of hate, sire. I have spoken with the thought of my own heart, of which I take counsel."

The king strode across the apartment, and when he returned, he gazed upon the girl with a strange look. There was anger—there was fear—there was vengeance—and yet much of admiration, upon his countenance.

"Once more I ask thee—would nothing induce thee to share my throne?"

"Nothing!"

"Not even—the fear of death?"

"Not even the fear of death," replied Ianthe, firmly.

Again the monarch crossed the room, and when he returned this time, he had assumed a look which those who knew him best would have dreaded.

"I meant not to threaten you," he said, with a strange tremor in his tone, and a burning light in his eye. "I only wished to try you to the last, for I had hoped that you might consent. Yet I assure thee—thou hadst much better accept mine offer."

"I cannot," was the maiden's response.

"And such is thy final answer? No power can change thy mind?"

"Not while I live, and have the sense of reason."

"Then I will not waste time with thee further."

Ianthe started at the sound of the king's voice, for it had greatly changed. She had not been so much moved by his look and tone of anger, for she had expected as much; but in this there was something dreadful — something that sounded doomful and final.

Pyrrho walked to the door, and opened it—not the door by which Ianthe had entered, but the one where he had come in—and then turned back.

"Come with me," he said, "and I will conduct thee to the place where thy father is!"

"Wilt thou? Wilt thou let me go with him?"

"Thou shalt see how true a king can be to his word. I mean now to send thee direct to Bellerus's arms. I can ill bear the thought of losing thee, but if thou wilt not be my queen, I can have no cause for keeping thee. So come with me.—Shall I lead thee?"

"No. I can walk alone."

The distance was very short—only a step into the bath—then across, into a short passage—a slight turn—an opening door—one more—and the tyrant stood within the closet where the fatal vault had been arranged! The maiden followed him—followed him until she stood upon the very center of that part of the marble slab which flew downward when the spring was set free.

"Thou wilt not be my queen?" the king asked, in a hoarse whisper; for even he was agitated now at the thought of the dread fate which yawned beneath the lovely being.

"Oh! I cannot. Carry me to my father!"

"Thou shalt be with him very quickly!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Among the unreasonable and ridiculous prejudices which many people imbibe from those who go before them, is an admiration for old customs and things, and a belief in their surpassing excellence. Nothing modern can be good. Every recent improvement is an unwarrantable innovation upon the sacred system of the past. Every scheme projected for the public benefit, every new invention, is the butt of censure and the object of a sneer. We are even a puny generation in stature, compared with our gigantic forefathers, whose longevity and strength at least doubled that of their ill-starred posterity. The moral depravity of the age is another theme of depressing comparison. We are gone deeper into the stream of turpitude than any preceding generation. In short, we are on the very brink of perdition. In literature, also, we are in a state of retrocession. To sum up all, our condition is truly pitiable, and the blindness of too many to the immeasurable superiority of the old state of society, is operating to effect our irretrievable ruin. That agreeable fable of a poetic imagination, the "golden age," probably gave rise to this prejudice in favor of retrospective excellence. We so naturally feel an admiration for the good that is beyond our reach, and are so apt to invest it with fictitious splendor, that it is not wonderful a pleasant illusion should depreciate the value of present things below the brilliant visions of past excellence, which imagination colors so highly, and the dreams of future good, of which hope is for ever holding up to us the shadowy semblance. A dissatisfaction with the present, independent of any merits of the past, tends to attach to the latter no inconsiderable value, and is a latent cause of the disposition of which we complain. Reason, however, is the touchstone by which truth must be elicited, and it shows that this crying up of the "good old times" is a sheer fallacy, and that no times were so good as the present.

A GOOD SCRIPTURAL NAME.

The Richmond Times, of a recent date, relates the following:

A gentleman traveling in a section of country which shall be nameless, stopped at the house of a pious old woman, and observing her fondness for a pet dog, ventured to ask the name of the animal. The good woman answered by saying that she called him "Moreover."

"That's the querest name for a dog that I ever heard," exclaimed the gentleman.

"Yes," said the pious old lady, "but I thought it must be a good one, as I found it in the Bible."

"Found it in the Bible!" quoth the gentleman. "Pray in what part of the Bible did you find it?"

The old lady took down her Bible with the utmost reverence, and turning to the text, read as follows:—'*Moreover* the dog came and licked his sores.'

"There," said she, triumphantly, "have I not the highest authority for the name?"

THE LETTER.

BY CLARA SYDNEY

I sank to slumber holding to my breast
The letter which my final sentence bore,
Worn out and stupefied by long distress,
And having wept till I could weep no more.

I dreamed your letter was a poisoned thorn;
That you at evening came and near me stood,
And in my bosom made a fatal wound,
Then wept to see how flowed the crimson flood.

I dreamed you kissed the wound and sobbing said,
"Thus do I spare thee pangs no tongue can tell;"
And then you clasped me to your heart to die.
I kissed your hand and answered, "It is well."

Then came a change; and "Hasten home, my love;
Come back to my embrace," your letter said.
"I cannot, *will not* tear you from my arms;"
With joyful heart at once I homeward sped.

There you awaited me—enshrouded, cold and *dead*.
Oh, woe! oh, joy! oh, agony of love!
At last we met again, in peace, above;
You had recalled me; naught could now divide
Life parted us; Death made you all mine own,
Therefore I blessed the Lord for what his hand had done.

THE MISSION OF GOLIAD.

AN INCIDENT OF TEXAS.

We were a party of eight. Besides myself were three *old Texians*, a term applied to the early emigrants to the country, while it was under Mexican rule—those who figured in the war of the Texian Revolution. These men were experienced Indian fighters, and versed in all the strategy of Indian warfare. They were Sparry, Manny and Hodge. The former was past the middle age. The two latter were young men, but all large and athletic. Accompanying us were an equal number of Mexican peons. These men we had employed on the Rio Grande, to assist us in conducting a large *manada* (or drove) of mules and half-breed horses we were taking, on speculation, to the settlements on the Brazos and Trinity.

We had accomplished one-half of our dangerous journey—dangerous, not only on account of the Indians, war parties of whom we were liable, at any time, to encounter, but also from the vast herds of *wild mustangs*, which hourly threatened to *stampede* our manada. In most gallant style do these hosts of riderless cavalry charge up within short pistol shot of the traveler, then wheel with the regularity and precision of a disciplined troop, and after completely encircling him, dash away with mane and tail streaming upon the breeze.

It is during these exciting charges, that all the skill and experience of the Mexicans are called into use, to prevent the animals from breaking ranks, and dashing away over the plain after their wild relatives. All their instinctive love of freedom returns, and often, even the swift lasso of the herdsman and the pistol of the Texian fails to arrest the leader of the herd.

Often, with the most skillful *duleros*, (herdsmen,) large manadas are thus stampeded, and the owners, who may be accompanying them, are left with only the animals on which they may, at the time, be riding. During the passage of our army over these plains, on its way from Corpus Christi to the Mexican frontier, a large number of valuable dragoon and artillery horses were thus lost.

When the gentle horse once escapes, and joins the wild herds, he immediately forgets his former domestic habits, and in the freedom of his wide range, becomes as untamable as his wild associates.

We had safely conducted our manada thus far without discovering signs of Camanches, Apaches or Lipans, or even losing a single animal.

We were approaching the San Antonio river, on whose banks we had determined to encamp for a day or two, to recruit our animals on the luxuriant *grama grass* which there abounds. A few miles only intervened between us and the stream. From the occasional swells of the rolling prairie, we caught views of the white walls of the mission of Goliad, a large and strong stone edifice of solid masonry, in bygone years used as a church and a fortress.

It happened to be my turn that morning to ride in the advance. This post was filled by us Texians in rote, as it was a rather desirable one from its immunity from dust. It was my duty to look out for mustangs, and on their appearance, to report them to those in the rear, who immediately collected the scattering members of the herd, closed up the ranks, and covered them carefully on each flank, prepared to prevent the threatened stampede.

I was riding carelessly along, seated sideways on my mule, and engaged in watching the beautiful *mirage* on the south-eastern horizon, when my attention was called to objects apparently moving along the shore of an illusory lake. The objects seemed to approach nearer and nearer, and now stood out distinctly against the sky. They were certainly horses; so, riding out of the trail, I drew rein till the manada came up, and turning in my saddle, gave the usual alarm, "*Mustangs! mustangs!*"

Sparry, it seems, had also seen them, and shading his eyes with his raised hat, took another long, scrutinizing observation across the prairie, then turning to me, coolly replied—

"Yes, doctor, them *are* mustangs—there's no doubt of that—*but they're mounted, though*. There's an Ingin on the fur side of every one of them critters yonder!"

I certainly could distinguish nothing but what appeared to be a large herd of mustangs, apparently approaching us at a leisurely trot, and so expressed myself to the old man.

"Did you ever see a Camanche or Lipan?" inquired he, with his eye still fixed upon the horizon.

I admitted that I had not, and acknowledged my ignorance of their habits.

"Well, I reckon you'll know enough of 'em soon, and rather expensive knowledge, I reckon, it'll prove to some on us, too," he replied. "If they were near enough to shoot with a pocket pistol, you'd see nothing but a foot sticking over the back of each of them horses! The fools think we are greenhorns—they're trying to come the old wild mustang game over us—but they can't come it over an old Texian. Now, doctor," continued he, "them red devils yonder are too many for us, out here in the open prairie; we must make a run for it, and corral our critters in the old mission, there ahead, and then make the best fight we can."

So saying, he spurred up to the manada, which, while we were engaged in examining the approaching objects, had moved ahead, and giving the necessary orders, we were soon all rapidly galloping towards the mission.

The Indians—for such they really were—seeing that they had been discovered, now raised themselves erect in their saddles, and, with discordant whooping, dashed along over the plain. Their design evidently was to cut us off from the mission.

We had the start of them, however, by more than a mile. But as they were mounted on fleet and fresh horses, they rapidly gained upon us. Before we reached the great gateway the savages were within hailing distance; but we succeeded in getting in with our animals before they came up. To our great surprise we found the mission buildings were already in the occupation of another party. This was a crowd of women and children, with a small number of armed men. The latter received us gladly, and assisted us in securing our horses. They had observed our approach from the housetops, where they had been on the lookout for Indians, and descending, hailed our little party as an addition to their defensive force. They were a portion of the inhabitants of the village on the opposite side of the river. From them we gathered, in a few words, the cause of their being assembled in this place.

The Indians were threatening the settlements and town of Refugio, about twenty miles distant to the south, and messengers had that morning early arrived, calling upon the men of Goliad to come to their assistance. The Irish settlement of San Patricio, on the Neuces, had already been alarmed, and its people were on the trail. Not fearing an immediate attack upon their own place, the Goliad people, after placing their families in the old mission, as the strongest shelter, and detailing fifteen of their young men for its defense, hastened to the relief of their neighbors of Refugio.

It is customary thus, among the widely-scattered settlements of southern Texas, to call upon each other for help in case of an Indian raid, and no consideration, except the imminent peril of their own families, would prevent them from hastening to the rescue.

Our party now added to the Goliad men, made a force of more than twenty, well armed, to keep the place against a force of more than two hundred fierce, war-painted Lipans.

We hastened to reach the tops of the buildings, occupied by the women and children, and as the Indians came whooping and yelling towards us, we received them with the contents of our rifles. A good number tumbled from their mustangs. But they still charged up, almost under the eaves of the houses, before they discovered the addition to our party. The men of Goliad, than whom no better Indian fighters were to be found in the Republic, loaded and discharged their weapons with the coolness of veterans, and shot the savages from their horses as they would wild turkies from their roosts.

Meeting a warmer reception than they had reckoned upon, the Indians fell back beyond rifle shot, and for a little time seemed to be engaged in a consultation. In a few minutes, however, they filled the air with their demoniac war-whoops, and yelling vengeance, dashed into the trail leading to the ford, and thence to the now deserted village.

"Take that, you bloody cut-throat!" exclaimed Sparry, as he sent a parting shot whistling after the hindmost savage.

The distance was long, but the unerring rifle of the old Texian was true to its aim, and the stalwort form of the red warrior measured its length upon the plain.

Gathering up the body and accoutrements of their dead comrade, and giving a fierce yell of defiance, the Indians rushed through the swift current of the San Antonio. In another moment they had reached the village.

From where we stood upon the flat roofs we could see the motions of the Indians, who in a confused mass filled the streets of the little town. They dismounted, and commenced breaking down the doors and windows of the houses. There were none to dispute the place with them. It was but a few moments before every dwelling was broken into, and its contents scattered over the streets.

The stores offered a tempting array of plunder to the red devils, and they were not long in discovering that some of them contained whiskey. Barrels of the fire-water were rolled into the streets, set upon one head and the other knocked in.

Then commenced an indescribable pandemonium; and, like furies just released from hell, they filled the air with their demoniacal whoops. The maniacal crew, rigged out in finery from the stores in grotesque disorder, circled and danced around the whiskey barrels, and howled out their savage exultation as only Indians can.

The Goliad men could not look on this wild scene unmoved. There was their worldly wealth, their all, being scattered, broken and destroyed, by these infernal fiends, before their eyes—almost within their reach. And when, at last, the Indians, in their drunken fury, commenced firing the town, and the black columns of smoke preceding the red flame began to burst from their recent homes, they themselves became as furious as their enemies. They could look on the scene no longer, but determined to rush out, and wreak vengeance upon the drunken rabble, many of whom, by this time, were stretched upon the ground in lethargic insensibility.

In vain we counseled them to remain with us; that though they might revenge the destruction of their town by the death of some of the savages, their little number had no chance of escape from the overwhelming mass, now infuriated by the drink. We pointed to the terror-stricken women and children, and implored them not to expose them to the sure destruction which awaited them if they left us.

Our little party, deprived of their numbers, was by no means adequate to the defense of the Mission when the Indians, wearied with their work of destruction in the town, and maddened by the fire-water, should return to the assault.

But our arguments were unheeded. The young Texians insisting that now the Indians were too drunk to fight, they could safely charge out amongst them, and after a hand to hand affair, would again fall back to the cover of the Mission, if need be.

Leaving us, therefore, the entire original force of the Texians went on their way through the thickets covering the banks of the river. They reached the stream, which they forded undiscovered by the Indians; and passing cautiously up the farther bank, rushed into the crowd of drunken savages, among the burning houses.

From the housetops we watched their reckless, but most gallant assault. The savages, intent upon their orgies, were taken by surprise. Many had thrown aside their weapons, in their eagerness for plunder, and the maddened Texians made most rapid and fearful work among them. They used their bowie-knives and the lances of the drunken rabble, and before the astonished Lipans had rallied the streets were strewn with their warriors. Blood flowed freely.

At length, aroused by the sight of the sanguinary flood, the savages seemed to comprehend the insignificant number of their assailants, and now it was that the struggle became a fearful one.

The little band of heroic Texians became lost to our sight in the crowd of yelling warriors that now closed them in, and pressed upon them. Still we could catch an occasional glance of their bright blades, as they flourished them over their heads, and buried them to their hilts into the painted hides of their foes.

So absorbingly engaged were we in watching this fearful struggle, that we did not perceive a large, dark mass of horsemen, which had been pouring over the plain from the south-west.

These new-comers were close upon us, when our attention was called from the town by a fearful scream from the women.

"My God, look yonder!" exclaimed Manny, who stood by my side; "the praire is covered with Indians!"

It was so! Our situation had been a critical one from the first. But now we were completely in the power of the savages. It was useless, madness to contend with this host of warriors, which now came bearing down towards the mission. The Goliad men having thus imprudently left us, what could *four* men do against such a force? for the Mexicans could not be reckoned in such an emergency; they had already sought the protection of the largest number, and, with the women, were crying and wringing their hands in despair.

In vain we stretched our gaze over the grassy level, in the direction of Refugio, in the hope of detecting the returning party of whites who had gone to its relief in the morning. The approaching Indians had come evidently from that point, and our only hope was that they had been defeated in their attack upon that place, and were now retreating, with the whites on their trail.

But this hope died within us, as soon as conceived. The far horizon, in the rear of the advancing savages, was quite clear—nought but the waving grass of the plain met our view.

On came the wild troop—throwing up their lances, beating them upon their bull-hide shields, and yelling at the top of their lungs. They only slackened their speed for a moment as they reached the Mission—where we had withdrawn from sight behind the parapets—gave a scrutenizing look at its walls, then dashed off again toward the burning town.

As yet our friends were struggling among the savages in the streets. How many yet survived we knew not—to escape from their foes we knew was impossible.

As the fresh arrived savages reached the ford, they gave notice of their presence to their comrades, by a wild, unearthly yell, uttered in concert, which was answered back again. Then the united howlings of both war parties made the air hideous; and when they came together among the burning ruins of the town, we looked for our friends. But they were no longer to be seen. They had all fallen beneath the lances and war clubs of their foes. They had been "wiped out" to a man.

The Indians, no doubt, would soon return to the assault of the Mission. What could our little party avail for the protection of the defenseless women and children now cowering within its walls?

In this dilemma I turned to Sparry, whose experience with the Indians made him our best counselor.

"We're in a tight place, there's no mistake in that!" said he. "It's a little the meanest scrape I ever got my foot into," continued the old Texian. "Now if 'twasn't for these women and children, I know very well what *we* might do. But of course that's out of the question now."

"What would you do?" I inquired, as the old man remained silent and thoughtful for a moment.

"I'll tell you what we *might do*, but what we could never look a white man in the face for agin. We might get off easily enough ourselves, but we couldn't save the women—there's too many of 'em. If it wasn't for them, we could make a break for the chapparal along the river there, and have some chance for our lives. 'Tis almost useless to fight the entire tribe of Lipans, with these poor creeters upon our hands; but we're in a trap, and must do all we can for them. We'll get 'em on the roof of the chapel here, and fight as long as one of us can stand. Possibly their friends may now be on their way back, and may yet arrive in time to save them. I'm in for a fight, boys. We can't do much with them red varmints, but we can trouble 'em some." Sparry's plan was immediately acted upon. We hurried the women and children upon the azotea of the chapel, where behind the high parapets they would be out of reach of the arrows of the Indians.

At the suggestion of Manny, a pile of loose stones within the court was transferred to the roof, to be dashed upon the heads of the assaulting Indians, should they attempt to climb up to us. These he facetiously termed our artillery.

These preparations were scarcely completed, when a loud, shrill war-whoop from the other side of the river announced that the Indians were about to return; and soon they came spurring through the river, and up the bank, a confused crowd of devils, maddened by the whiskey, and infuriated by the death of their comrades—for the Texians had made fearful work in their desperate struggle.

They surrounded the Mission; and, yelling like fiends, discharged a shower of arrows into the court. These fell only among our animals, who, frightened by the missiles, and tortured by the wounds they inflicted, dashed frantically around the enclosure.

"Now, boys, let the hell hounds know where we are!" exclaimed Sparry, as he showed himself above the parapet, and deliberately drawing a fine sight, selected a huge Lipan, and tumbled him from his horse. It was probably a war chief, for the Indians now became more furious, if possible, than before, and leaving their horses upon the plain, rushed on foot into the Mission. In a moment they had swarmed upon the surrounding housetops, and into the body of the chapel beneath us.

The walls of the chapel were much higher than the other buildings, and we could look down upon their roofs. The Indians were below us, and we continued to discharge our pistols and rifles into the thickest of them. Every bullet was a messenger of death. Those buildings being without parapets afforded no shelter and were soon deserted; still the savages continued to shower their arrows from the doors and windows, but with little effect. We were completely covered by our sheltering parapets.

We watched the chances as they showed themselves, and poured the contents of our weapons among them.

Sparry repeated his shots with rapidity, but as the old man laid aside his rifle for an instant, and was in the act of hurling down an armfull of stones upon a crowd that had gathered at the base of the wall, a savage from an opposite window gave the alarm, and placing a shaft to his bow, sent it hurtling to the brain of the old veteran. He fell back upon the roof, dead!

Encouraged by this event, the savages gave vent to an exultant yell, and made a rush for the tower, through which was the entrance to the roof. Now it was that our "artillery" came into play. But three of us now remained. After giving them the contents of our pistols, we rattled down upon their heads armfull after armfull of stones. They crushed upon the skulls of the savages, spattering the walls with their brains, and piling them at the foot of the stairs. For a moment this checked the assault; only for a moment, however, for after dragging away the bodies of their dead and wounded fellows, the Indians returned to the attempt. Soon our stony ammunition began to fail us, and as it was impossible to reload our firearms rapidly enough, they gained possession of the belfry.

Poor Hodge was the first to fall. But he died with his harness on. Manfully he stood at the entrance, and as the savages poured up he hurled stones, pistols, and whatever came to hand upon their heads; and when these were exhausted, he grappled the form of a powerful Indian, and dragged him to the edge of the azotea. The savages rushed up, and divining the intention of the Texian, pierced his body with a dozen lances. But too late—for their purpose! In his dying throes he raised the savage with a convulsive grasp, and dashed him headlong to the court below! We heard his huge carcass strike with a dull, crushing sound upon the stony pavement, and Hodge, with an exultant, half-maniacal, "Ha! ha! ha!" fell back upon the impaling lances of the savages.

I have not the heart to describe the horrible scenes which followed,—the dragging us down the stone stairways of the tower, to the nave of the church below (for they had reserved Manny and myself for the torture—they were to glut the vengeance of their fiendish hearts upon our prolonged agony)—the binding of our bleeding limbs with thongs, which cut to the bone—the impaling of infants upon their lance points, and dashing them against the altar stones—the quarreling and gambling for the division of the wretched captives,—for the women and older children were reserved for a cruel bondage. These fearful and disgusting scenes, I care not to describe. And when the dark night closed around us, in our prison house, the savages lighted fires upon the pavement, and made the reverberating arches echo to their terrific howlings. These mingled with the groans of the frantic mothers and shrieking children, made a hell of horrid sounds, never to be forgotten! Still, at times,—though years have passed by, do they ring in my ears like the knelling of death bells.

But oh!—that most terrific scene of all that fearful, livelong night, when my friend, poor Manny, was dragged to the altar, lashed to the huge cross, and in hellish mockery of the death of Christ, was murdered, inch by inch upon the sacred symbol, by those infernal imps of darkness!

* * * * * *

The sun rides high above the green prairies. The old mansion of Goliad is still crowded with armed men—but they are friends—men of Goliad, Refugio and San Patricio, for all the settlements have been aroused. Where are the captives of the previous night? They are here in the embrace of friends, fathers, husbands, brothers.

And the Indians, who last night thronged the mansion, and filled the air with their fearful yells—where are they? Look upon the heaped pavements of the court;—and then, out upon the bright prairie;—their painted carcasses strew the plain! Look! the air is darkling with the broad-winged vultures gathering to the feast,—from the far-off horizon they are marshaling,—through the smoke of the still burning town they come,—and still *may* they come,—*for there is enough for all!*

BREAKING PROMISES.

BY AUGUSTA HERBERT.

There are people who seem to have, as regards promises, no moral sense. They make promises without thought, and break them without remorse, whenever they find it convenient and pleasant to do so.

If it were only the confessedly unprincipled who were guilty in this respect, it would not be so much to be deplored; but the truth is that those who claim to be Christians offend as recklessly as do others. There are *names* at this moment in the mind of the writer of persons standing high in social rank and religious profession, who have made and broken more promises within a year than would suffice to sink twenty souls. But it don't seem to disturb them in the least. They are just as serene and smiling of aspect as if no such sin and no such infamy were upon them, or charged to their account *in black*. In one instance a person said to one of these false promisers:

"But, sir, you engaged to do so and so. Do you so soon forget your promises?"

"Oh!" returned the other, with the utmost good humor and insensibility to any responsibility in the matter, "Oh! well, I dare say I did so; but I make so many promises to you that I can't be expected to remember them all." What an admission! He did not make his word good; the person who was thus made a sufferer by his falseness, never again was able to regard his word as of any worth.

"A bad promise is better broken than kept," is a saying often in the mouths of the unreliable. Though that saying may be true, it is a poor excuse for the greater part of those who use it, for no man has any business to make a *bad*, i. e. an immoral promise, and though he might be punished for keeping such an one, he will certainly be punished for making a promise that ought to be broken. "Blessed is he that voweth to his heart *and changeth not*," says The Book; and we echo, "yea, blessed," not because he made a promise that was to hurt or trouble him, but because when he found that such was to be its influence he did not for that disappoint the trust that was reposed in him, but nerved himself up like a man to meet and endure the consequences of faithfulness.

Great care should always be taken in passing one's word. It should never be done hastily, or without full consideration; but having judged it kind, and wise, and right to promise aught, a man who *is* a man will make his word a rock whereunto his fellows may anchor their faith never to have it shaken. A promise breaker is a liar and an abomination, be he who or what he may.

WANT OF PUNCTUALITY.

Few things tend more to alienate friendship than a want of punctuality in our engagements. We have known the breach of a promise to dine or sup break up more than one intimacy. A disappointment of this kind rankles in the mind—it cuts up our pleasures (those rare events in human life, which ought not to be wantonly sported with!)—it not only deprives us of the expected gratification, but it renders us unfit for, and out of humor with, every other; it makes us think our society not worth having, which is not the way to make us delighted with our own thoughts; it lessens our self-esteem, and destroys our confidence in others; and having leisure on our hands (by being thus left alone) and sufficient provocation withal, we employ it in ripping up the faults of the acquaintance who has played us this slippery trick, and in forming resolutions to pick a quarrel with him the very first opportunity we can find. One great art of women, who pretend to manage their husbands and keep them to themselves, is to contrive some excuse for breaking their engagements with friends, for whom they entertain any respect, or who are likely to have any influence over them.

RATTLESNAKES AND DEER.

"I was going up a river in a boat with an Indian," said a countryman, "when we observed a number of rattlesnakes on the side of a large, shelving rock. 'Uh!' exclaimed my companion, 'want to see fun?' I replied in the affirmative, when he quickly brought the boat to land, drew his knife from his pocket, and cut a stick from a bush, trimmed it, and stripped off the leaves, leaving only a fork at the end, with two short prongs. With this he approached one of the snakes, and pinned him down, by sticking the fork into the ground over his neck. He then begged me to give him a little gunpowder, which he made up in a kind of cartridge, with a bit of twine connected with it. With another string he managed to fasten the little cartridge to the tail of the snake; and then, sending me to the boat, pulled up the stick, and retreated to it himself, hastily pushing off a short distance from the shore. There he sat, directing my attention to the snake, which crossed along the face of the bare rock in full view, till he reached a cleft, into which several others had gone on our first landing. "Wait a minute," said the Indian; and I remained looking, as he did, at the spot. A few seconds after I heard a sound, and saw a little snake rise from the hole; and directly afterwards snakes began to come out by dozens, little and big, in numbers which greatly surprised me, scattering in all directions, with all the speed which their nature would allow, and with an appearance of the utmost consternation.

"Much has been said of the insensibility of Indians to the common feelings of mankind; but no one could have seen my companion at that time without being convinced that a red man could enjoy a joke in the highest degree.

"Some of the most wonderful things told me, by travelers in the west, relate to the conflicts sometimes carried on between rattlesnakes and deer. It seems inconsistent with the natural timidity of deer, that they should attack so formidable and repulsive a reptile as the rattlesnake; but it is well established that they do so, not only when self-defence may seem to require it, but also when they can be impelled only by a bold and persevering antipathy, which amounts to a deadly hostility. The manner of fighting, on the part of the deer, is so singular and peculiar, that it well deserves to be known.

"On discovering a rattlesnake, as I have been credibly and repeatedly informed, the deer springs into the air, draws its four feet close together, turning the points of his hoof downwards, and endeavors to fall so as to strike the snake. When he succeeds, he gives severe, and perhaps fatal wounds. But this, as may be supposed, rarely happens the first time, or even the second or third. It is more common to miss the serpent entirely for some time, or at least to wound him but slightly, as he is commonly in motion, and has time to change his position somewhat while his persecutor is in the air. The reptile engages in the conflict with great spirit, and maintains it a considerable time, unless he early receives a severe wound from the hoofs of his active adversary, which are so sharp at the edges as to cut when they strike directly upon him. The snake endeavors, first, to avoid a blow; and then to inflict a wound with his poisoned fangs, upon the deer, before the latter can recover itself from its fall, and spring beyond his reach. In this he occasionally succeeds, coiling his length in circles, opening his wide and fiendish mouth, and leaping suddenly. And now comes the most surprising part of my story.

"As soon as the deer feels a wound, he retires into the field or forest near, and walks about, seeking something on the ground. He usually soon finds something, which he greedily seizes and eats, and then returns and renews the fight, generally killing the snake before he relinquishes the contest. Of the nature of the antidotes to which the deer resorts when wounded by the snake, there are different opinions and reports. It is not always easy to ascertain it; at least I have found much difficulty, said a friend who had peculiar opportunities to observe wild animals, for I could not follow the deer without frightening him away; and he usually goes to a distance, eats but little and swallows it quickly. The common opinion is that it is snake-root; and I have reason to believe it is so; though it may be that instinct (that is Divine Providence) has taught it the use of more than one remedy against the deadly poison of the rattlesnake." T. D.

LUTHER AT TABLE.

The genial and hearty Luther was great at table. None of his works has, perhaps, exerted a greater influence than his *Table-talk*, reported by his friends. "It is deeply touching," says Michelet, "to see how everything led him to reflections on the goodness of God, the state of man before the fall, the life to come," &c. A branch loaded with fine cherries, the delight of his wife in serving up some fish from a little pond in their garden, the mere sight of a rose, would give him a subject. One day, while his children were taking their places round the table, looking eagerly at a dish of peaches which was served up, Luther exclaimed, "Whoever would see the image of a soul rejoicing in hope, will find it here. O, if we would look with such eager joy for the life to come!" This reminds us of a good man we once knew, who would sometimes task the young breakfasters or diners thus:—"How many countries have yielded up their products to spread our table to-day? Who raised or prepared for us the tea, coffee, sugar, rice, salt, spices," &c. &c. All this would naturally pass into conversation about the different regions and races which had furnished these commodities, their geography, history, products, arts, civilization, and the benefits of that world-wide commerce to which men are driven by their common wants and natural dependence. We have seen him take up a piece of fruit, and cutting it in two, point to the skin, pulp and seed enclosed in their hard integuments, and all hanging on that little but tough stem which held the whole firm till it was ripe and then dropped it to the ground. We have known an apple in this way furnish even sublimer truths than it taught to Newton.

RELIGION AND MARRIAGE.

Consistent religious principle is the only sure basis of happiness in the married life. Nine-tenths of all the separations and divorcements that have occurred, we doubt not, have taken place between persons destitute of the sanctifying influence of God's grace on the heart. The very moment we wander from heaven, that very moment we get into the toils of the net of Satan, and then begin our restiveness and disquietude. Two streams meeting and mingling their waters, and flowing on through wood and vale to the ocean, is one of the most beautiful objects in nature. Not less beautiful, in the moral world, is the sight of two kindred hearts uniting and flowing on in the same quiet channel to the greater ocean of eternity. True religion in the heart of both husband and wife, is the surest guarantee of bliss here and forever.

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ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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NO.

Not a little of our security and success in life depend on the well-timed and resolute utterance of that monosyllable.

Sometimes it is an assertion of individuality; and every man, whether in opinion or action, has a right to that. Sometimes it is a safeguard against temptation; and every man, alas, has need of that. *Sometimes it is the interposition of an effectual and impassable bar against the selfishness, the insinuating artifices, the meanness or even the malignity of others*; and who is so happy as not to be assailed by these? An eminent merchant of New York used to say that he was largely indebted for his success in life to his ability to say *no*.

Napoleon cast a longing eye on Spain. The annexation of that splendid Peninsula was necessary, he said, to give to his already ample realm the completeness and rotundity which he desired. A diplomatic interview was arranged in reference to the matter, in which Spain was represented by one of her ancient magnates. The arts, the arguments, the boundless promises, the insinuated threats of Napoleon were all resorted to, and that bland smile which was said to exercise a sort of fascination upon those on whom its influence was exerted. The noble old Hidalgo, to whom the interests of his sovereign and the independence and nationality of his country had been confided, heard him through;—and then, drawing himself up into a grand and commanding attitude, he gave his whole answer in the single word—*No*. Napoleon himself was struck with admiration at the dignity and firmness manifested in that answer. When afterwards asked by a distinguished personage what had been the result of the interview, he replied, "Sir, he treated me to a magnificent NO."

And *no*, when well-timed and firmly adhered to, *is* a "magnificent" thing—a high vantage-ground, a strong defense, a shutting up the gates and dropping the porticullis of the soul when a wily and treacherous enemy, with forces hid in ambush in the back ground, is parleying for admission. It is "magnificent" for the moral strength and dignity which it manifests, and for the security it throws over all those priceless blessings and hopes which the withdrawal of that one bolt would leave at the mercy of a ruthless enemy.

Review your own life, and you will find that not a few of its most serious inconveniences, its heaviest losses, its saddest deviations from right, its most entangling associations, might have been prevented by a timely utterance of *no*. What bitter tears, what long and hard struggles and inextricable perplexities might it have spared you!

Many a man has written himself and family into poverty by putting down his name across the obligations of another, who might have secured competence and tranquility to the rest of his days by just saying—*no*.

Many a youth has yielded to the temptations which undermined truth, virtue, honesty, character—who might have kept all these and all the blessings that are kept or lost with them, if he had met the first whisper of the tempter by a resolute *no*. Is not that "a magnificent no" which saves not an empire but a soul!

THE REASON WHY.

Many opinions have been expressed as to the probable cause of the murders recently committed in his own family by young Gouldy of this city, all of which, it seems to us, are wide of the mark. The young man simply acted out his real nature. Any man who makes a practice of hanging around haunts of viciousness, and habitually eats the bread of idleness, has native corruption enough in him to furnish the impulse to any crime that in his opinion may become expedient or desirable. An old man, who has served his time in the ranks of industry and done his man's work in the world, has earned the right to repose, and may innocently enjoy it; but the young man, be he rich or be he poor, who constantly consumes what he does not in some way honestly earn, is a bad person, and is ripening for disgrace and perdition.

TWO MIRACLES.

In a letter to Chancellor Bluch, dated August 5, 1530, Luther says, "I have lately witnessed two miracles. This is the first: As I was at my window, I saw the stars and the sky, and that vast and magnificent firmament in which the Lord has placed them. I could nowhere discover the columns on which the Master has supported their immense vault, and yet the heavens did not fall.

"And here is the second: I beheld thick clouds hanging above me like a vast sea. I could neither perceive ground on which they rested, nor cords by which they were suspended; and yet they did not fall upon us, but saluted us rapidly and fled away."

These were great miracles. We have seen them both. In fact, within the last few hours, we have witnessed several others quite as astonishing. Last evening, in the western sky, a little above the horizon, we saw what looked very much like a globe of fire, followed by a train which reached far up towards the zenith. Such an one appeared in 1680, and Sir Isaac Newton computed its heat to be 2,000 times greater than that of red hot iron. It moves about fifteen millions of miles per hour. Its train is about twenty millions of miles in length. It crosses the orbit of Venus a very short time after that magnificent planet has passed. About 500 of these fiery masses, moving through space with this incredible velocity, have been seen, since the abode of man upon earth. Yet none of them has ever come into collision with one of the innumerable stars among which they move and whose orbit they sometimes cross. Swiftly as it moves, and eccentric as its orbit seems, yet all is adjusted with such exactness, that the very time when it will again come within the sphere of human vision (some three hundred years hence) can be calculated. It is a "miracle" of brilliant beauty, power and regularity.

Another. Last night the writer was very tired. All energy of mind and body seemed to be crushed out by the wear and tear of the day. About ten o'clock we lay down, and presently sank away into a state of complete unconsciousness. For the next six or seven hours we knew nothing that was going on around us. It was a state very much like death. But at the end of that time we came to. We felt as if the freshness of a new life was shed over every limb and faculty. From a condition so nearly resembling death, we seemed to awake to a new life. Calm, vigorous and hopeful, we got up and prepared for a new tug with life's toils and trials.

Another yet. When we sank away into the oblivious state last night, the air was dark, cold and damp. This morning, when we awoke, a glorious light suffused the eastern sky. The clouds were dight with a thousand brilliant liveries. Presently a magnificent orb appeared over the eastern horizon, from which inexhaustible radiations of light and heat flowed over the earth and filled the atmosphere. What source supplies these perpetual emanations of light and heat? How is it that the earth, though performing at once two movements, one on its axis, the other in its orbit, both of prodigious velocity, yet meets those rays with such sure precision, that time is measured and the most delicate instruments corrected and adjusted by the progress of the morning light!

What glorious "miracles" are the alternations of night and morning! How salutary and beneficent, as well as grand and beautiful!

In fact, the aspect of nature, the history of the world, the life of man, present a perpetual succession of "miracles" to the open eye, the thoughtful and thankful mind.

"SATAN REPROVING SIN."

A leading daily journal, in the very same issue which gave an article condemning prize fights, gave a description of the last bloody and disgraceful exhibition in that line, not excelled if equaled by the reports of the most industrious of the sporting papers themselves! In observing this glaring inconsistency, we were forcibly reminded of the saying about "Satan reproving sin."

And here is the source of the weakness of not a few of our public journalists, who profess to have at heart the welfare of society. In the conduct of their journals, they are constantly giving the lie to their high professions. They serve to remind one of the relations of the boy who sets up the pins, in a bowling alley, to the player. As fast as he sets them up down they go, and thus he never makes any headway. So, as fast the editorial writers of these inconsistent, and at least *seemingly* hypocritical, journals set up their well-elaborated homilies against prize fighting, their reporters knock them down with the force of a ten-strike! One would really think these moral delinquents would blush at the sight of their own columns. The miserable excuses they make for serving up such demoralizing dishes as those referred to, and those which are worse, if possible, give one room to hope, after all, that all sense of shame has not died out within these sin-reproving Satans of the daily press.

But there is not much room to hope that prize fights will cease, while they are indirectly encouraged in other ways, such as the appointment of notorious champions of the ring to public places—men who would never have been heard of, but for the notoriety they have secured with their bloody and brutual exploits! And that at least one such has actually held an appointment under one of the most important and influential bureaus of our Government, is a fact which has gone into history, beyond the power of recall.

LOUNGING!

What a habit for an intelligent being in an age of such stirring events and so characterized by busy life as this, in which Providence has cast our lot! And, yet, see how many thousands are addicted to it in every community!

A friend of ours prides himself on the fact that, when he is absent from his domestic circle, after the close of business, no one knows where to find him—in other words, he never suffers himself to have a lounging place where habit sends him to pass even his hours of leisure. The reason of his persistence in this course, which he assigns, is that he became such a victim of the lounger's habit while living in country villages, and saw so much of it in other men, that he never thinks of it, but with loathing and horror.

It is to villagers, rather than citizens, that we address ourselves. In cities, there is so much, of either evil or good, to attract attention, that this habit is not so prevalent as in rural places. In the latter, it often becomes a mental and moral malady, from which scarcely a male inhabitant escapes. The moment the evening meal is eaten, away they go to some favorite lounging place at the store, or the tavern, leaving their families—perhaps young wives whom they have brought among strangers—to pass the long winter or hot summer evening in solitude, while they talk politics, smoke segars, and squirt tobacco juice among their fellow loungers! We wish we could avoid fearing that they are not, some of them, engaged in even worse practices, to which this sufficiently detestable one of lounging so frequently leads.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

A LIFE SKETCH.

A small, dark, cheerless room, an unshapely bed, upon which lay an unshapely remnant of humanity, whose faded eyes had wandered up and down those barren chamber walls, till every crack and crevice was as familiarly mapped out to the closed, as to the open eye. Everything dark and dingy, colorless and dreary; the propped up, worm-eaten table, and three-legged chair, and fireless hearth, and broken-paned window with its stuffing of rags; the wailing wind that whistled through them,—passing away! passing away! Mournful memories, the slow, sad procession of lost hopes trailing their tarnished, world-begrimed brightness through the accumulated dust of years, palsying the tongue, filming over the eye that still, while life lingers, roam with unspeakable and restless longings for something to rest upon beside darkness, gloom and decay.

Now and then a neighbor, poor and care-worn as herself, looked in upon the bed-ridden old woman. Short time they had, God knows, in the hurrying scramble for daily bread, to think or care for aught else; none of them knew her history; none knew how little she whose limbs had once been so daintily decked ever dreamed to lie through those weary days, and weeks, and moments, so helpless, so friendless, prisoned in from the blue sky, the sweet flowers, the green earth, biding her time to be carried out by careless hands to lie beneath them.

'Twas weary waiting—'twas weary listening for some voice that had music in it, 'twas weary looking only upon faces trouble-seamed and care-worn as her own.

The door opens gently, and the light streams in through the doorway full upon a young girl, fresh as if just from the hand of God, upon locks like vine tendrils upon the rosy cheek, and eyes of heavenly blue, upon the sweet mouth with its pitying smile—filling the dingy room with a brightness like one of God's own angels. The old woman raised herself upon her elbow and gazed upon the maiden, as one would gaze upon a flower in the desert,—upon a star in a rayless night,—upon the bright winged bird which lights for a brief moment upon the tempest-tost ship. Then—sinking back upon her pillow with a murmur like the home sick mariner in his dreams, she sighs, ah, me! how beautiful is youth!

FANNY FERN.

SITTING FOR MY PORTRAIT.

The other day I was riding in an omnibus, when it got too full by one little girl, whom I offered to take on my lap, as the mother had her arms full of parcels. She sat for a moment on my knee with her finger in her mouth, and head turned shily away. Then she made up her little mind to look round in my face, and see whether or no she would continue to stay with me. I declare that I awaited that scrutiny as bashfully as ever a timid lover did his maiden's answer. I actually felt the blood rushing up to my cheeks, as the clear blue eyes looked searchingly into mine, as if God himself were asking, "Lovest thou me?"

Then the little thing turned her head away again, but not till she had given me a warm, bright smile, by which I knew that her heart knew no fear of me. I did not speak, because we understood each other; I waited as one waits near a bush upon which a little humming bird has alighted—fearful lest a breath should disturb it. By-and-by she gave a careless glance out the omnibus window, and says—by way of encouraging me—"There's horses out there."

"Yes," said I.

She waited a few minutes longer—then finding me still apparently bashful—she says—

"There's shops out there."

"Yes," said I again.

Then she waited another while—and then turning her cunning little face full upon me as if determined to *make* me speak, she says—

"*Ain't* there many *peoples* out there?"

Now you may laugh—but that child's favorable verdict after looking at me so intently—gave me more pleasure than I know how to tell you;—had she jumped down off my lap—I shouldn't have dared to face my looking-glass that day, lest some hateful passion, born of the world's strife, had written its satanic "Get thee behind me," on my Cain-branded brow.

FANNY FERN.

FOR WHOM THE CAP FITS.

The other day I took up my morning paper, one third of which was filled with an elaborate account of the beastly, disgraceful fight between two human battering rams, called—par courtesy—pugilists. Turning to the other side of the paper I saw an editorial article denouncing in no measured terms the brutality of the thing, denouncing the laws which wink at such nuisances, but still—deeming it their duty as journalists "catering to the desire of the public," minutely to chronicle the alpha and omega of the whole affair *to lay upon our family table*. Beautiful consistency. It won't do, gentlemen; if, instead of hiding yourselves behind the flimsy screen of "duty as public journalists," and all that transparent trash, you had said—honestly—"confound the morality of the thing, we must make hay while the sun shines—*it will sell so many hundreds more of our paper*, and if we don't do it the other papers will pocket the coppers;" you should have said it, and I would have respected you. What humbugs you must be when "*a woman*" can see through you!

FANNY FERN.

HURRY VS. SPEED.

It is, doubtless, necessary to be in a hurry sometimes. Indeed, it is unavoidable. But the habit of hurrying is a bad one, and in most cases it fully justifies, in its results, the saying, "the more hurry the worse speed."

Lord Bacon, in one of his essays, tells of a wise man of his acquaintance, who had it for a byword, "Stay a little, that we may make an end the sooner." His own opinion is given, that it is one thing to abbreviate by contracting, another by cutting off, and that business so handled goeth, commonly, backwards and forwards in an unsteady manner.

Some people make it a point not only to be, but to *appear*, always in a hurry. If they meet you in business circles, or in the street, they are in "*such* a hurry" that they "haven't time to say a word." If they visit you at your place of business, they have, like Paul pry, just popped in, and "hope they don't intrude." With "only a minute to spare," ten chances to one they will bore you for an hour of the most precious portion of your time.

To the contrary of all this sort of conduct, your really expeditious man never seems in a hurry, and seldom is so. Instead of suffering his business to hurry him, he so arranges its details as to avoid this result. With him, order and system make everything easy of accomplishment, thus completely reversing the experience of his unsystematic and hurrying neighbors.

EQUALITY.

Humanly speaking, beyond the natural right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," there is, and of necessity can be but little equality among men. There is everywhere and always, upon the least observation, an almost infinite gradation of qualities and capacities, that go to determine the true altitude of every man, and to shew that men are no more equal in intellect, morals and sociality, than the trees of a forest are equal in hight. And this fact, instead of impeaching—as some aver—the beneficence of the Creator, is one of the clearest proofs of His unerring wisdom; for without this gradation, there could be no satisfactory division of necessary human labor, and no harmonious community among men.

If all men were equal, in all respects, who would be found willing to serve in any subordinate capacity, or accept any inferior reward or honor? Who would consent to moil and drudge, while his no-better fellow-man took but the pleasurable post, or perchance idled in luxury? It is easy to see that with such a condition of humanity, there would be no willing doers of humbler duty, or of dirtier work. But if all such difficulty were to be overcome by each doing his own drudgery, still perfect equality would reduce society to a monotonous dead-level. Without the spur of a possibility of superior individual excellence, the human mind would stagnate. Praise and blame would become idle terms, and ambition cease to stimulate where there were no chances for distinction.

The Almighty knew better than our would-be social levelers—who, by the way, are for leveling down those who are above, rather than leveling up those who are below—how to qualify and dispose mankind for their own highest good. By means of the very inequality which foolish faultfinders would do away, if they could, God has provided fit hands for every species of human labor, giving some hopeful spur to every worker, and harmonizing the endless variety of conditions and professions. Human philosophy can no more improve this divine arrangement than it can improve the physical machinery of the universe. It is a part of "the eternal fitness of things," which characterizes all of God's works.

But while the bad man must be ever condemned, and the foolish man given over to his folly, there is nothing, necessarily, in the inequality of human conditions derogatory to the humblest man. If he seeks the best he knows, and does the best he can, he will do his whole duty. If he accepts a toil beneath his capacity when he might have had a higher, he will demean and punish himself. It is the working out of the best that is in man, that attests his worth and nobility, and though his talent and sphere may be humble and inferior, his purpose and spirit, compared with his advantages, may be equal to the greatest man's. Equality except in natural rights, must be forever among men a comparative term. Men are not equal to one another, but to what God has endowed them to be and do, and each finds his level and labor far more providentially than is generally undesrstood.

A GOOD JOKE.

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE AND QUEEN VICTORIA.—On the occasion of the recent meeting of these two illustrious ladies at Cherbourg, the extraordinary circulation of the NEW YORK LEDGER was reverted to and discussed with much animation. The Empress and the Queen—who, by the by, are regular readers and enthusiastic admirers of the LEDGER—were most impressed with the idea of what an enormous income a paper with such an unparalleled circulation must yield to its proprietor. "The price of the LEDGER," said the Empress, "is $2 a year, one-half of which must, of course, be clear profit. The circulation is reported to be three hundred and fifty thousand, at the very lowest. At a dollar a copy, this, of course, gives a clear profit of $350,000 (which I believe is nearly equal to two millions of francs) per annum—just a nice sum for pin-money. I shall have the Emperor start a paper in opposition to the LEDGER at once, with the understanding that I am to have the profits for my own pocket-money."

"Ah, my dear Empress," replied the Queen, with an impressive shake of the head, "it is of no use. I and Albert thought of the same thing months ago, but finally abandoned the idea as one impossible of execution."

"Impossible! your Majesty. Impossible! Pray, how and why impossible!"

"I will tell you, my dear Empress. We couldn't get the contributors. That New York publisher, BONNER, has got all the best writers, and he has bound them to write 'exclusively' for the LEDGER."

"If that be the case, your Majesty, I shall have the Emperor secure the European agency for the LEDGER—that'll be the next best thing to publishing it."

The Queen was about to make an angry reply, (as she wanted the European agency of the LEDGER for Albert,) when fortunately the signal gun summoned the illustrious ladies to their places on their respective ships-of-war, and a rupture of the friendly relations between France and England was thus happily avoided.

HAMMER AND ANVIL.

It is not every man who knows that he has a hammer and anvil in the inside of his head. Yet such is the fact. The delicate and mysterious structure of the tympanum of the ear includes a *malleus* (hammer) and *incus* (anvil). A French acoustician has recently asserted that if any one will divest himself of cravat and collar, in order to give free movement to the head and to prevent disturbing sounds, and then move the head rapidly from one side to the other, the note *la* will be distinctly audible, caused by the concussion of the *malleus* on the *incus*; that if two *las* are audible in perfect unison, it indicates a high degree of musical taste and susceptibility; if only one, the like susceptibility in a less degree; if two *las* are heard in dissonance, it indicates an incapacity to appreciate and enjoy harmony, and, in fact, an aversion to music amounting often to disgust. In putting this theory to the test of experiment, we would recommend the avoidance of a too sudden and violent movement, which might be attended with injury to the delicate muscles of the neck.

ABOUT SOME HORSES.

A cotemporary quotes a statement of an English paper in regard to the recent sale of a horse, in London, for two thousand dollars, and says that "all such stuff and stories are sheer nonsense, as there never was, is not now, and never will be, a horse worth two thousand dollars." We are constrained to differ with the editor who penned that sentence. We know several horses, none of which could be bought for two thousand dollars, and a few that would bring from three to five thousand dollars a piece. The owner of the famous Morgan horse, "Ethan Allen," has been offered twenty thousand dollars cash in hand for him, which sum he contemptuously refused; and it is positively stated, by those who have abundant means of knowing, that "Ethan Allen" cannot be bought for a dime less than forty thousand dollars.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

THAT man must have a poor and frozen fancy who does not possess a sun and moon obedient to his own will, which he can order to rise with much less difficulty than he can ring up his servants in the morning, and, as to woods, lakes, and mountains, he who cannot conjure them up to his mind's eye as glibly as he can pronounce the words, may depend upon it that he is—no conjurer.

TO a man of poetical thought, a glorious scene in nature, once beheld, is a portion of eternity enclosed within a frame—a landscape withdrawn from the grand gallery of heaven and hung up forever in one of the chambers of the brain. Neither age nor mildew, nor heat nor cold, can crack its varnish, or dim the luster of its tints.

DR. J. X. CHOBERT, of New York, the fire-king, who used to sit in hot ovens with legs of mutton till the latter were roasted, has just received from the French Emperor the St. Helena Medal for having served twenty-six years in Napoleon's Grand Army. No doubt it was in that service he learned to *stand fire*.

A SPIRITED woman of our acquaintance caught her husband the other day in the act of breaking up her hoops. The exertion or something else had a singular effect upon him. His hair came out at an astonishing rate.

"YOU would be very pretty indeed," said a gentleman patronizingly to a young lady, "if your eyes were only a little larger." "My eyes may be very small, sir, but such people as you *don't fill them*."

THERE was never a more beautiful reply than that of a good man in affliction, who was asked how he bore his sorrows so well: "It lightens the stroke to draw near to Him who handles the rod."

"YOUNG man," said a minister to a youth of his congregation, "do you know what relations you sustain in the world?" "Yes, sir," two cousins and a grandmother, but I don't intend to sustain them much longer."

THE powerful are more deaf to the voice of experience than their inferiors. Power multiplies flatterers, and flatterers multiply our delusions by hiding us from ourselves.

IT is better to have wisdom without learning than learning without wisdom, just as it is better to be rich without owning a mine than to own a mine without being rich.

AS the mean have a calculating avarice that sometimes inclines them to give, so the magnanimous have a condescending generosity that sometimes inclines them to receive.

FAME has a trumpet and a scroll and a pair of wings, but we could never hear that she had such a thing as a bank account that was not pretty generally overdrawn.

IT may be seriously doubted whether the singing of the nightingale has ever awakened so much enthusiasm, or inspired so many sonnets, as the singing of the tea-kettle.

A NEIGHBORING editor says he lately met with one of his jokes thirty years old. We suspect he has met with a good many of them much older than himself.

MORTAR is said to be *adhesive*, because, being of a confiding nature, and imagining that every object is "a brick," it will attach itself to anything.

CÆSAR made a crown of laurel to cover the defects of a bald head. Most crowns of gold cover greater defects of the head.

JOHN Bull recently accomplished in the Celestial Empire what common bulls would in a china-shop—a great smashing of China.

THE most disagreeable condition for a grumbler to be in is to feel like grumbling and have nothing to grumble at.

IT has been said that it must be easy to break into an old man's house because his gait is broken and his locks are few.

A POPULAR writer says that men, like children, are "pleased with a rattle." Not much, if it is at the tail of a snake.

A PIOUS writer says "we can't expect to stay in this world." But certainly the ladies expect to *stay* in it.

THE greatest liar tells more truth than falsehood, and the worst man does more good than evil.

WOMAN lost paradise to make man wise; he deserves purgatory if he makes her wretched.

SOME men endure their pleasures with less patience than others do their pains.

WHEN you see traders running to the brokers, look out for *breakers*.

SCURRILITY is the corruption of wit, as knavery is of wisdom.

ABOVE all things, never despair; God is where he was.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A LOVELY widow, named Taylor, was recently tried in Orange county, Virginia, for the murder of her deceased husband, and acquitted. A negro was then put on trial as an accomplice in the crime and the widow called to the stand as a witness. When one of the counsel attempted to cross-examine her, she turned her back upon him, saying he was so ugly-looking he would be the death of her, and playfully throwing her arms around the neck of the State's attorney demanded his protection "against the monster of a lawyer who was eager to destroy her." The laugh which this scene raised quite extinguished the cross-examiner and enabled the widow to withdraw in triumph.

IT is said that when Morrissey and Heenan, with their backers and the "crowd," arrived at the fighting ground on Long Point, Canada, a dozen or two of the Canadian police, arrayed in their neat uniform, and brandishing highly varnished staves, approached and ordered the rabble "to disperse, in the name of the Queen," which command was received with a shout of laughter so hearty, that the policemen felt instinctively that there was "blood" at the bottom of it, and wisely let the assembled "muscle" alone.

AN aged citizen of Petersburg, Va., named Bennett Aldridge, who recently died in the eighty-second year of his age, had long before prepared for the event by having his grave dug and a heavy tomb built therein, by lining the grave from bottom to top with thick blocks of granite, under the strange notion (which the old man had long cherished) that the devil could not scratch through stone walls.

A YOUNG man named Thomas E. Searcey, while engaged with others, lately, in "raisng" a log house in Carroll county, Ky., suddenly left his work, seized an ax, cut several gashes in the top of his head, and then, laying his neck upon a log, attempted to cut his own head off, when his horrified companions seized and, after a desperate struggle, secured him.

A FLORIDA paper says that the Indian war in that State may be considered as closed, and that it is high time it was forever ended, as thus far each Indian killed or removed has cost the United States not far from one hundred thousand dollars, to say nothing of the valuable lives sacrificed thereby during the last twenty-five years.

PARSON BROWNLOW, of Knoxville, Tennessee, says he shall no longer give his subscribers credit—that all must pay in advance, as he is determined never again to employ a collecting agent and thereby force any man made in the image of his Creator to do so mean a thing as to repudiate a newspaper subscription.

IT is reported that the scholars in many of our Public Schools are not taught spelling at all, and that, consequently, their orthography is wretchedly bad. Some of the true friends of education are making a stir about this matter, and it is to be hoped that the evil will be corrected speedily.

A NEGRO named Jackson, while suffering from delirium tremens, leaped out of the second story window of a house in Cincinnati, fell twenty feet, and struck square on his head, without inflicting the slightest injury. The shock would have dashed any intelligent white man's brains out.

LEVI BUCK, a boy not yet twelve years of age, whose parents live in Washington, D. C., was one of the passengers in the burned steamer Austria, and saved his life by swimming for more than an hour. He has arrived in safety at his home.

A MAN who has long been confined in the Virginia Penitentiary was recently pardoned out by Governor Wise, but "his regard for the welfare of the establishment prevented his leaving until a good cook could be supplied to take his place."

IT is feared that the marriage by telegraph of Brother Jonathan and Cousin Victoria which was recently celebrated with so much glorification, will prove a most unfortunate one, as not a word has yet passed between them.

FIVE murders were recently reported in our morning papers, all of which had been committed in the city during the previous night.

LITTLE CHILDREN.

BY ALICE CARY.

O how empty of delight,
And how full of heavy care,
Many a house would be to-night,
But for little children there.

Ah, what picture is so fair
As the homeliest cabin wall,
That is garnished with a pair
Of bright shoes and stockings small.

And what pleasant music gone
Sings to memory half so sweet,
As the rudest floor, whereon,
Falls the patter of bare feet.

Blessings, blessings on the beds
Whose white pillows softly bear,
Rows of little shining heads
That have never known a care.

Pity for the heart that bleeds
In the homestead desolate,
Where no little troubling needs
Make the weary working wait:

Where, within some unused press,
Rose-leaves, wet with tears, are spread
O'er each tiny cap and dress,
Sacred to the darling, dead.

Safely to the heavenly fold,
Bring them, wheresoe'er they be,
Thou, who saidst of them, of old,
"Suffer them to come to me."

RICHARD HOFFMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER C.

THE CRISIS APPROACHING.

Intelligence of the death of Andrew Silex fell like a thunderbolt on Lady Boothroyd. It seemed to her like the breaking of the first thread in the web she had so skillfully woven. Marshall, the lawyer, was instantly telegraphed for; and, after a long conference went down to St. Faith's with instructions to secure all papers, deeds, and letters the steward might have left in his hands, pertaining to the Meldown estate.

It was an anxious interval with the ambitious woman, till her agent returned. At the first glance of his features, she read that he had failed.

"Hear me," said the man of law, "before you blame me. I lost not an instant on my arrival, but proceeded at once to the Home Farm; but found myself powerless to act—the executors had taken possession."

"Pshaw," muttered her ladyship, angrily, "rustics. Have you lived all these years without learning the use of money? I gave you *carte blanche*."

"It was useless in the present instance," observed Marshall.

"How so?"

"The executors are Mr. Thornton and the tenant of Meldown. I think your ladyship must admit, with me, it would have been madness to have thought of bribing them."

Lady Boothroyd changed color at the intelligence—the blow was as severe as unexpected. Of all men, Mr. Thornton was the one, perhaps, she dreaded most.

"Your visit, then, has utterly failed?" she observed.

"As far as actual success is concerned, it has," answered the lawyer; "but I have obtained valuable information."

"Proceed," exclaimed his hearer, impatiently.

"Andrew, you are aware, was murdered by his brother, who lately escaped from the hulks at Chatham, who——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted her ladyship, "I have heard that. The rector wrote to inform me, the wretched murderer was shot at the time, and is since dead."

"He was not alone," continued her agent: "he had a companion, of whose identity I have obtained a clue."

"What care I for the identity of the assassin!" interrupted the lady, in a tone of angry impatience.

"You have not heard *all*," said Mr. Marshall, with a marked emphasis upon the word "all."

In an instant his hearer became calm.

"The man I allude to," continued the speaker, "escaped at the very moment the crime was detected. In his flight he took with him some deed or parchment, which the steward had been perusing when they surprised him."

"It must have been the codicil," exclaimed Lady Boothroyd, thrown off her guard by the intelligence.

Scarcely had the words passed her lips than she bitterly repented the indiscretion.

"Codicil," mentally ejaculated the lawyer, "to whose will, I wonder; Sir Norman's, or his uncle's?"

"Marshall," said the widow of his former client, "I will not attempt to deceive you. There are reasons which make the recovery of that deed of importance to me. You say you have obtained a clue to the identity of the ruffian who has possessed himself of it. Follow it with the perseverance of the blood-hound; spare not either for money or promises; bring it to me, and name your own reward."

"Liberal terms, Lady Boothroyd; certainly very liberal," replied her agent; "and I will do my best to carry out your instructions."

"To whom has Andrew Silex left his ill-gotten wealth?" demanded her ladyship.

Her visitor could scarcely repress a smile. The question confirmed the suspicions he had long entertained of some dishonest service rendered by the steward, which had been exorbitantly paid.

"To a young gentleman who proves to be a grandson of Mr. Bently, your tenant of Meldown."

"And the motive for this unaccountable generosity?"

"I could not learn that."

"Who drew up the will?"

"Mr. Thornton."

Again the name of her upright country neighbor fell with an ominous, unpleasant sound upon the ear of the manœuvring, artful woman; who felt that a storm was gathering round her it would require all her energy to meet.

"I must urge this marriage to a conclusion," she said, as soon as she found herself once more alone. "Alice the wife of Illston, the father must support me with all the influence of his name and character. Our interests will then be the same."

Having come to this conclusion, she wrote two long and artfully concocted letters, one to her nephew, the other to the earl; in which she not only hinted, but urged her views. In the first, she sought to excite the jealousy of the viscount, by informing him of the declaration she had intercepted from William Thornton to her daughter. The attempt failed, as far as the jealousy of the noble suitor was concerned, for there can be no jealousy without love; but it served the writer's purpose as well.

It rekindled the slumbering hate he had long entertained against his former defender and schoolfellow.

In her epistle to the earl she complained of his son's coldness and inattention to Alice, and plainly stated her opinion that the match ought to be at once concluded or broken off.

The effect of her scheme was not doubtful. As far as the gentlemen were concerned, it succeeded.

From the day of Sir Norman's death the promise so heartlessly extorted from his child weighed heavily upon her spirit; it seemed to envelop her like a shroud; for to a pure and generous being like Alice the grave would have been preferable to a marriage with her cousin. There was not one feeling of sympathy between them.

"Would I were poor!" she frequently murmured to herself; "Illston would not then persecute me with his odious love; love!" she repeated, scornfully; "he knows not the meaning of the word. It is a noble passion, and seeks no happiness that is not mutual. My poor father, little did he imagine the hopeless misery to which he condemned his child. I was weak, very weak to have yielded to his entreaties."

Alice Boothroyd was indeed to be pitied; and yet the world, which judges from the tinsel of outward show, doubtless envied her. She was young, beautiful and rich; what more, in its opinion, could any reasonable being demand to constitute happiness?

More than once the unhappy girl had thought of making an appeal to the honor and manliness of Illston, not to enforce a promise destructive to her happiness; but when an occasion arrived—they were not frequent, for feeling secure of his victim, the noble viscount gave himself but little trouble to conciliate her—the courage of Alice failed her.

There was a cynical glance in his cold, gray eye which seemed to mock her sorrow.

She had not even the consolation of a mother's sympathy, for, as our readers are aware, but little

SCHEMING FOR THE CODICIL.

confidence existed between Lady Boothroyd and her daughter.

Since the death of her husband the manœuvring woman had become still more harsh and despotic in her bearing, thinking by such conduct to crush all spirit of resistance to her wishes. Little did the parent know the heart of her only child; but for the promise given to the dead, Alice would have broken her fetters and cast them to the wind.

She was seated in the drawing-room in St. James's-square, meditating on her unhappy position, when the earl and his son were both announced. The peer was not a bad-hearted man; through life everything had gone smoothly with him. The woman he had married performed the duties of her station gracefully, that is to say, she received his friends, presided at his table, and made his home agreeable by the refinement of her manners. Every one admired and spoke well of the countess. What could he desire more?

"My mother is in her dressing-room," said his niece, after the usual compliments and inquiries had passed. "I will inform her you are here."

Like the fluttered bird, she wished to escape the presence of her persecutor; but his lordship comprehended her motive, and, with his usual tact, defeated it.

"I am quite old enough," he said, "to visit my sister-in-law in her dressing room without scandal; do not trouble yourself, Alice."

Before she could reply to him he had quitted the room.

Evidently the visit of Lord Carlington and his son, as well as the absence of her mother, had been arranged.

Without being positively rude, Alice could not quit the room; to conceal her embarrassment, she walked to the window, and gazed on the children and their nurses in the square.

"She certainly does most cordially detest me," thought Illston; "well, it will render our marriage the more piquant. Once mine, I will give her full liberty to hate me."

"You must find your home exceedingly dull," he said, speaking aloud, "especially at this season of the year. My father's visit to town is a mere flying one—a cabinet council, or some such prosy affair."

Alice glanced at the mourning dress she still wore for her father. The speaker understood the appeal.

"Ah! yes," he continued; "but that was six months ago. Consider my feelings."

The smile of scorn which curled the lips of his hearer stung the speaker to the quick, for, like most selfish men, he was as vain as heartless.

"Not that I presume to urge them," he added, in a tone of bitterness. "Too well I know how slight an interest my devoted love has awakened in your heart. But is it wise, Alice, to cherish this indifference? Our marriage is an arrangement settled beyond the power of recall. Instead of protracting the engagement to the extreme limit your promise to your father will allow you, why not at once fulfill it?"

The visible shudder which ran through the frame of his cousin proved how little chance the viscount had of inducing her to *hasten* the period of the sacrifice.

"The countess and your mother are of opinion," he resumed, "that you might do so without impropriety, and you know they are unexceptionable authorities in all that regards the *convenance du monde*."

"Act generously, Illston," exclaimed Alice Boothroyd, gathering courage from her despair, "and instead of urging the completion of a promise wrung from my lips by a dying parent's entreaties, release me from it. It is not my fault that I cannot love," she added, "that my heart revolts at our union. In the world you may find one more sensible of the honor of bearing your name."

"But not so worthy," interrupted his lordship, with a forced attempt at gallantry.

"More fair."

"Scarcely."

"And richer."

"You insult me, Alice, by a supposition that wealth could influence me. Were you poor and dowerless, I should still demand the fulfillment of the promise *made to your dead father*."

The marked emphasis upon the last few words proved that the speaker indulged in no illusion respecting the nature of the chain by which he held his victim bound.

"You must have some heart," continued the poor girl. "Why condemn me to a fate others might envy? Why pass like a dark shadow between me and the sunshine of existence. Release me from my fatal, inconsiderate promise, and I will bless you."

"Never."

"Pledge myself never to be another's."

"Never," repeated his lordship, with a bitterness which denoted the depth of his resolution. "You have my answer."

"Enjoy your triumph," replied Alice, bursting into tears; "but it is a heartless and unmanly one. I have schooled my pride to beg where I despise. I have received your answer, my lord, now hear mine. Until the customary year of mourning has expired, no amount of persuasion or persecution shall induce me to bestow my hand. The pleasure may be a sad one, but I will not abridge my last hours of liberty."

"And when the year has expired?"

"Fear not, sir," she answered, turning from him with an expression of mingled aversion and disgust. "If living, the sacrifice will not be wanting."

"The promise is not a very gracious one," observed the gentleman, with an ironical bow, "but it will be remembered."

"Absurd! childish! ridiculous!" exclaimed Lady Boothroyd, entering from the inner drawing-room, where she had been a concealed listener to the latter part of the conversation we have narrated. "Alice, I blush for you."

"I am sorry to have given you occasion, mother," answered her daughter, calmly; "but my heart does not reproach me."

"Alice, my dear child," said her uncle, who now joined them, "this is positively unkind; consider Illston's feelings."

"Hang the fellow!" he mentally added; "why does he not try to look a little more sentimental?"

"He has shown so much for mine," observed the heiress, reproachfully.

"Remember that he loves," urged the peer.

"*And I do not*," replied his niece.

It was in vain that Lady Boothroyd tried to shake her resolution by indulging by turns in entreaties, cajolery, and reproaches; the resolution of Alice was not to be shaken. When urged almost beyond the limits of endurance by her mother's violence, the hitherto meek and obedient girl startled even her haughty spirit by the determination she displayed.

"This is a cruelty," she exclaimed, "which nature tells me I ought to resist. Reason suggests a doubt whether I am really bound by a promise extorted from me by a parent on his death-bed. Rather than be forced to its fulfillment I will break it," she added, with nervous excitement, "and let the sin, if sin there be, fall upon those who have driven me to it."

"Alice!"

"Oh, mother! mother, is there no voice to plead within your heart for your unhappy child?"

"None for her disobedience," replied her ladyship, coldly.

"Alice," said the peer, whose pride began to be touched by her openly expressed aversion, "if this repugnance is really unsurmountable——"

"Silence, my lord," interrupted his sister-in-law; "I blush for your weakness in listening to the ravings of a silly, romantic girl."

"I, at least, am not influenced by them," observed her nephew, coolly; "if my cousin chooses to perjure herself, rather than keep her promise to her dead father, it is an affair between her and her own conscience."

Alice clasped her hands despairingly.

"I do not intend to release her from it," he continued; "there is no fear of my displaying any such weakness. At the expiration of the year I am to have my answer. *I can wait*."

With these words the noble viscount quitted the room; they had been artfully calculated, he knew the effect they must produce upon the mind of his victim.

We know of nothing more difficult than to keep a secret in London; by secret we mean, of course, one of those circumstances in which the curiosity or the interests of the public are concerned. By some occult means or other the affair is certain to ooze out. At first a mysterious paragraph appears, conveying obscure hints; next initials, and lastly names are given, and facts stated which the idlers of society find patience and leisure to sift, till they have separated the truth, or something approximating to it, like corn from the chaff.

A few days after the interview which, as Alice Boothroyd believed, sealed her fate, she was startled by reading the following paragraph in one of the morning papers, headed, "Extraordinary disclosure in high life:"—

"A curious case is likely to employ the eloquence of the gentlemen of the long robe. A claimant, it is confidently stated, has appeared for the estates, or, at least, a portion of them, of a certain wealthy baronet, Sir N—— B——, lately deceased, in the person of a daughter of his late brother. The facts, we are told, are of a most interesting and romantic character. The young lady was stolen when a child, and sent to India. An attempt to remove her of a yet more criminal nature has been hinted at, which, seeing the position and high character of the parties implicated, it would not be prudent to more than allude to.

"The only daughter of the deceased baronet, and his presumed heiress, is not yet of age, and has long been betrothed to the oldest son of the Earl of C——, a distinguished member of the cabinet.

"The affair has created immense sensation in certain fashionable and aristocratic circles. The abduction of the claimant is stated to have taken place in St. Faith's."

Alice read the paragraph twice, and then handed the paper to her mother, whose countenance, despite her long habit of self-command, flushed deeply as she perused it.

"Ridiculous!" she exclaimed, tossing the journal from her. "The impertinence of these newspaper creatures is really becoming intolerable."

Her daughter was not deceived by her manner and affected indifference. Suddenly she recollected the little prisoner in the pavilion at Meldown Park.

"Was my uncle Allan ever married?" she asked.

"Not that I ever heard of," answered her ladyship. "At least, *they* have no proof that such a circumstance ever took place."

Alice mentally repeated the word *they*.

"There is some truth, then," she observed, "in the report."

"An absurd attempt to foist the child of a common soldier, a fellow who would have been hanged for murdering one of your father's keepers had he lived, into the family," replied her mother. "The girl has fallen into the hands of a set of scheming adventurers, whose object is, doubtless, to extort money by urging the claims of an impostor."

"Is she an impostor?" demanded her daughter, at the same time fixing her eyes upon those of her parent.

"A wise question, truly," observed her mother, embarrassed by the suddenness as well as the straightforward nature of the demand. "Of course she is. One thing at least is certain," she added, "impostor or no impostor, this pretended cousin can have no more claim to the Meldown property than the merest beggar in the streets. The will of your great uncle is quite clear in that respect."

Alice did not feel so convinced, and her recollection once more reverted to the prisoner in the pavilion, and the first faint dawn of hope awoke in her sad heart.

"Were I poor," she thought, "Illston would never claim me," and in her heart she devoutly prayed that the claims of Lillian might prove well founded.

Gladly would the persecuted girl have exchanged wealth for liberty.

CHAPTER CI.

THE "DETECTIVE."

Life and death we are told are both uncertain, and experience daily proves the truth of the aphorism. Happy would it be for mankind if uncertainty in human affairs were limited to these; such, however, unfortunately is not the case. Health, riches, fame, success, friendship, and even love, are subject to the same sad law. A day, an hour, may undermine the foundation upon which they, one and all, rest, leaving life a blank—existence a wreck.

The more we reflect upon this subject, the more inevitable the conclusion we arrive at. Certainty exists only in the exact sciences—uncertainty is one of the conditions of our existence.

But of all the uncertainties in this uncertain world, the greatest uncertainty most certainly is the law; compared with it all others appear insignificant—a mole-hill to a mountain, or, as Hamlet has it, "Ossa to a wart."

Such at least was the inference which Sir Charles Fourreau, Lieutenant Marsh, and our hero drew from the opinions of three eminent counsel whom Mr. Morton had consulted on behalf of Lillian.

Sir Frederick Silvertongue considered that a case of conspiracy and abduction might *possibly* be proved, and suggested criminal proceedings against Lady Boothroyd.

Serjeant Rough was of opinion that criminal proceedings were quite out of the question, inasmuch as the Boothroyds were the legal guardians of their neice, and in that character had an undoubted right to the disposal of her person.

Bellam, the great chancery barrister, advised a bill in equity, calling upon the executors of the will of the great-uncle of Lillian, to account for the residue of the personality which the testator had neglected to dispose of. As her father's representative, he considered the young lady had a right to a share in it.

There was one point, however, the three gentlemen of the long robe unanimously agreed in. That in the absence of any legal proof of the marriage of Allan Boothroyd, the case became involved in considerable obscurity.

"Obscurity!" exclaimed Richard Hoffman; "why it is as clear as the sun in the heavens at noon-day."

"*Morally clear*, my dear boy," said the friendly lawyer, tapping him on the shoulder, "morally clear. Unfortunately justice does not see with our eyes."

"Eyes!" repeated the lover of Lillian, indignantly. "It must be blind as ignorance, willfully blind; how else can you explain the——"

"I know, I know," interrupted Mr. Morton, good-humoredly. "Time was that I entertained some such crude notions myself."

"I confess that I cannot comprehend this diversity of opinion," observed Sir Charles, "where none ought to exist. If law is a science, it certainly is one of the exact ones."

"And therein lies its beauty," replied the lawyer. "You cannot see it, it is hardly to be expected that you should do so, but I can; it has been the study of my life."

His hearers came, mentally of course, to a conclusion as unanimous as the one the three eminent counsel had arrived at, that the study was anything but a profitable one.

"After all, Morton," said the lieutenant, who had not previously spoken, "you have not given us your opinion. I, for one, feel inclined to be guided by it, assured that it will be an honest one. Do you incline to Silvertongue's advice?"

"Certainly not," was the reply. "Serjeant Rough's objection I consider fatal; the bill in equity is decidedly our best course."

The baronet and our hero looked disappointed.

"The pecuniary interest, were it even greater, is a mere secondary consideration," observed the former; "Lillian will be sufficiently rich without it. What I most earnestly desire is to prove her claim to the name of Boothroyd."

"And do you not perceive, Sir Charles," answered Mr. Morton, "that by the means proposed, we open the entire question. The chancellor, no doubt, will direct an action to be tried at common law; this will give us time to seek out witnesses to the marriage. I am sorry to disagree with you," he continued; "as to the pecuniary point; in my opinion, it is large, much larger than you imagine; had it been otherwise, Lady Boothroyd would never have compromised her reputation, to say nothing of her personal safety, by so decided a step as the abduction of her neice, which, fortunately, we are *in a condition to prove*."

His hearers nodded approvingly.

"If we could only obtain the parchment deed, will, or codicil, whichever it may prove," added the speaker—"and I am not without hopes of recovering it soon from the hands into which it has fallen—we should then be in a position to judge of her ladyship's motives."

"Something I can understand at last!" exclaimed the baronet, pleased with the clearness with which the lawyer explained his views. "I need not urge you to use every means—to spare no expense; money is not an object."

"The first time I ever received such an instruction," observed Mr. Morton, with a smile; "but clients betray a melancholy impatience on the subject of costs. Fear not but I will do my best."

The mode of action having been decided upon, the gentlemen returned to Mivart's, where they found Major Hawley and his strong-minded little wife. They had called during their absence to renew their acquaintance with their god-daughter.

The lady honored our hero with rather a critical glance when Lillian introduced him to her. The scrutiny appeared satisfactory—considering that he was not a military man, her beau-ideal of a lover—for she honored him with a gracious smile, whilst her husband shook hands with him most cordially.

"That lawyer is a clear-headed man," observed Mrs. Major Hawley, when informed where Sir Charles and his companions had spent the morning; "one of the very few I have met with who appeared comprehensible."

"And as honorable as he is clear-headed," replied Richard Hoffman. "I have known him from boyhood."

"And what says he?" demanded the lady.

"The great difficulty lies in the absence of any legal proof of the marriage of Allan Boothroyd."

"Legal proof!" repeated the god-mother of our heroine; "what does the man mean? Was not the mother of Lillian known to be his wife? received everywhere as his wife? visited everywhere as his wife? I should like to have seen the officer in *our* regiment," she added, in a tone of indignation, "who would have ventured to introduce any creature into our society!"

The eyes of Lillian filled with tears; to her sensitive nature it was painful to hear even the possibility of her parents not having been united, discussed

"To doubt it," said the lieutenant, with emotion, "were to doubt the purity of heaven itself; for, apart from a brother's partial fondness, a nobler being ne'er existed than my sister. When in India, I made a long and fruitless journey to obtain the certificate of her marriage; but, unfortunately, the station at which I believe it to have been celebrated had been destroyed by the rebel sepoys, and the archives burnt. But you, madam," he continued, "who were on such intimate and affectionate terms with her, did you never hear her name the chaplain by whom the rite was celebrated?"

"Never."

"Or inquire where?"

"I had no motive for such a question," answered the major's lady. "No one who ever came in contact with Mrs. Boothroyd could have entertained a doubt upon the subject. All I know is, that it took place before Allan obtained his epaulettes. You should have seen him; there never was a more fond, devoted husband—he was as proud of her as fond. Do you remember, Hawley, how indignantly he expressed himself when Gresham, of the Artillery, bowed to him, because his wife was on his arm, and Gresham had *that woman* with him?"

"Certainly, my love," said the major; "it almost came to a quarrel. And, after all, the party

you allude to was to be pitied as much as blamed; she had——"

"Hawley!" interrupted his wife, "none of your barrack-room excuses for profligacy, if you please; highly unbecoming at your years—very."

The gentleman colored to the temples at the reproof thus sharply administered; but, like a well-trained husband, submitted to it.

"Lillian, my love," said the lady, willing to change the subject, which she saw was a painful one to her god-daughter, "you do not wear my gift."

The fair girl regarded her with surprise.

"I mean," added the speaker, "the chain and locket I gave you at your christening—the torquoise. You remember it, Hawley—the one I bought in the bazaar at Delhi."

"Distinctly," replied her husband; "with the sentence from Hafaz—'Hope in all—have faith in all,'—engraved upon it. Poor Dr. Tytler and I never could agree about the use of the particle."

"I recollect it perfectly!" exclaimed Lillian, "and wore it, I feel certain, during my residence at St. Faith's, but cannot call to mind when or by whom I was deprived of it."

"Perhaps Rose can afford us some information," observed Lady Bell.

Mark Rayner and his wife, who were both staying at the hotel with the baronet and his family, were sent for.

"We never saw the trinket," replied Rose, in answer to the inquiry. "Lady Boothroyd felt terribly disappointed at not obtaining possession of it; it is one of the reasons she alleged for not fulfilling her promise to give up the leaf torn from the Bible. Happily," she added, with a glance of affection to her husband, "of no importance now."

The subject of the chain and locket was permitted to drop; no one attaching any other value to them than of a memorial of the donor's affection.

We must now request our readers to quit the happy party assembled in the drawing-room at Mivart's, and accompany us to a less interesting locality—a small, cold-looking, uncomfortable house in a narrow court in the city. The ground floor consisted of two rooms, both used as offices, and communicating by a green-baize door. It would have puzzled a casual visitor to tell what kind of business could possibly be carried on there.

There were neither a safe nor ledger, boxes for papers, nor shelves for samples of merchandise in either of them; the only articles of furniture consisted of a small round table and a few chairs.

The same description will apply to each of the rooms except that the windows of the one looking into the court were filled with ground glass; with those at the back a similar precaution had not been necessary; they opened into a small paved yard which was not overlooked by any of the neighbors.

This was the private office of Mr. Meadows, a retired inspector of police, who, for several years had exercised his calling of detective on his own account.

Could the old paneled walls of either of those rooms have spoken, they might have revealed strange confidences and startling episodes in real life—secrets to make the fortune of a novelist, and give the philosopher a deeper insight into human nature than all his books had given them. Unfortunately, however, they were dumb; the confessions they have received can never be repeated, unless Mr. Meadows should——*but no; the ex-inspector is discretion itself. There is little chance* of his ever relating them—the speculation is a hopeless one.

There is nothing very remarkable in the appearance of the gentleman we are about to introduce to our readers, and yet we feel disposed to describe him.

Mr. Meadows, judging from our recollection of him—for we have never been sufficiently intimate with him to know his hight correctly—stands about five feet eight, or at the most five feet nine; his figure, thin and wiry—a certain indication of strength; his head, small, round, and bullet-shaped, not unlike a Puritan's; his features, regular, but not particularly expressive—which latter trait probably constituted one of his great advantages in the profession he had chosen, since it enabled him to listen to the most appalling statements and exciting narratives, without betraying the impression they produced.

The gentleman whom we have just sketched—and many, no doubt, will recognize the portrait, although it is only a pen-and-ink one—was seated in the front office, looking over a small memorandum-book, whose contents would have puzzled Champoleon—who read the hieroglyphics as easily as a boy of ten reads his primer—to decipher.

On each page there appeared a number of little crooked characters, interspersed with mysterious dots, and Roman numerals; then followed, perhaps, a diagram, which most certainly had nothing to do either with Euclid or the Principia—Professor Airy himself would not have attempted to describe it, although no doubt perfectly intelligible to him who drew it.

The occupant of the room had already received one visitor that morning, and scarcely looked for a second, his clients being far more select than numerous, as our readers will understand when we inform them that it was necessary that those who sought his assistance should come, not only with well-filled purses, but perfect confidence, the latter a *sine qua non* to his undertaking a case.

Evidently he prided himself upon his professional successes, and did not think fit to endanger his reputation, however tempting the fee.

There was a ring at the office-bell, followed by a tap at the wall of the passage, given by the servant to ascertain whether his master was engaged.

"Yes," said the ex-inspector, in a loud, clear tone, but without raising his eyes from the little memorandum-book, which seemed to have a peculiar attraction for him.

The bolts of the street-door were withdrawn, and Mr. Morton entered the room.

"I presume that I am not unknown to you," observed the lawyer, with a smile, "although my visit has doubtless surprised you."

"Persons in my profession," replied the detective, "rarely forget a face they have once seen; and as for being surprised, respectable men—*very respectable ones*—frequently visit me."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the gentleman. "The fact is, I require your aid in a very important affair; and may as well state, at once, that the fees will be large, the confidence unbounded."

Mr. Meadows smiled graciously.

"Do you consult me on your own account?" he asked.

"No; on the part of a client."

"The name?"

Mr. Morton hesitated.

"First let me inquire," he replied, "whether you are engaged in any affair connected with a murder recently perpetrated in Devonshire?"

"At St. Faith's—the steward of the late Sir Norman Boothroyd; I remember the circumstance. There is a large reward offered for one of the assassins who escaped."

"Just so; but you have not answered my question," observed Mr. Morton.

"I am *not* engaged in any affair connected, either directly or indirectly, with it," said Mr. Meadows.

And the assurance that he was not, perfectly satisfied his visitor, who at once proceeded to relate to him the history of Lillian; to which the detective listened most attentively without interrupting him by a single question, till he had concluded, when, opening his memorandum-book, he began to write.

"The affair is complicated," he observed; "but I have unraveled as tangled a thread in my time. Have you any clue to the name of the man who escaped from the farm after the murder?"

"A slight one," replied his visitor; "in fact, rather a supposition than a clue. Manders, the nephew of the murdered steward——"

"And the murderer?" interjected the ex-inspector of police.

"And the murderer," repeated Mr. Morton, "supposes him to be a fellow named Fiddler Dick."

"His reasons?"

"Fiddler Dick was one of Mike's companions in crime."

"And what is the character of this Manders?" inquired Mr. Meadows.

"He bears an excellent one," replied the lawyer. "He has only just returned from India with the family of Sir Charles Fourreau: all who know him entertain the highest respect for him."

This last observation dissipated any vague suspicion that might have been lurking in the astute mind of the detective.

"This Fiddler Dick," resumed the speaker, "has a wife who betrayed him some years since to the police. The wretched woman lives in continual dread of his return. I had some communication with her in consequence of inquiries I instituted in behalf of Major Hawley and his wife, clients of mine."

"Do you know her address?"

"No."

"That is of very little consequence," observed Mr. Meadows; "I can easily discover that."

"When you have done so, I wish you would let me know it."

The officer nodded as much as to say certainly, and having made one or two more notes in his memorandum-book, the affair, with the exception of the fees, was considered settled.

"You will look upon this merely as a retainer," said Morton, handing him a check for a hundred pounds; "for all necessary expenditure you have *carte blanche*."

"Very satisfactory—very satisfactory, indeed!" replied the former, as he glanced at the amount. "I perceive that you understand business thoroughly; it is a pleasure to transact it upon such terms. I have your address," he added, "and in a few days trust to have information for you."

As Mr. Morton quitted the court, he met a respectable, solid-looking man, with a certain bucolic expression of feature and style about him, which convinced the lawyer that he came from the country. He was not far wrong, the party being no other than Marshall, the adviser, or, more properly speaking, the agent of Lady Boothroyd.

There is a sort of fremasonry in every trade or profession; its members generally recognize each other by indications which escape the unpractised eye, at least it proved so in the present instance, *for each of the gentlemen mentally pronounced* the other a limb of the law as they passed—Morton to his brougham, which was waiting for him; Marshall, to the office of Mr. Meadows.

Although our friend Morton possessed a much higher sense of the real dignity of his profession than the country practitioner, the latter far exceeded him in his ideas of the importance his name being upon the Rolls conferred. With Marshall it was a personal feeling which made him as offhanded with those he considered his inferiors, as inborn natural servility rendered him cringing and subservient to those above him; to him a police officer was simply a police officer, and he entered upon the object of his visit to the clever detective in the same patronising tone he would have employed with one of the rustic constabulary of his native county.

"I want to employ you," he said, taking the seat Meadows silently pointed to. "I am told you are a shrewd, clever fellow. As I intend to pay you well, I expect you to act honestly by me. I warn you that I shall keep an eye upon you," he added, "so it will be useless to attempt to deceive me."

"A difficult task, no doubt," observed the detective, with a suppressed smile.

"I flatter myself that it would be," replied his visitor, fixing his eyes upon him. Marshall had great faith in the power of his glance.

"*And having flattered yourself, sir*, perhaps you will inform me in what way I can be of service to you."

There was something in the tone as well as the words, that rather confused the country practitioner, who colored slightly, and resumed the conversation in a less patronising tone, to the great amusement of the speaker.

"A murder has been committed upon the person of the steward of the late Sir Norman Boothroyd."

"I have read an account of it in the papers," replied the officer, who began to feel greatly interested.

"That is not the worst," added his visitor.

"*I am aware it is not!*" was the reply.

Marshall regarded him with an incredulous stare.

"The ruffian who escaped took with him a parchment, or deed, which it is of the utmost importance should be recovered, and for which——"

"Lady Boothroyd is willing to pay handsomely," interrupted Meadows, without moving a muscle of his countenance. "Pray proceed."

"I! really, I cannot understand this!" exclaimed the astonished lawyer.

"*You are from the country*," quietly observed Mr. Meadows.

Never had Marshall's self-importance been so lowered before.

"I see!" he exclaimed, struck by a sudden idea, "that double-faced, treacherous woman has been with you, although she declared everything should be left to my direction."

The ex-inspector smiled. He was too shrewd to deny, and, let us add, too honest to confirm the impression of the speaker by a falsehood. If the gentleman thought fit to mislead himself, that was no affair of his—certainly not. Of course, the opinion his visitor let slip touching the character of the lady who employed him, did not pass unnoticed.

"Permit me to remind you," he said, looking at his watch, "that my time is valuable. I have an appointment in an hour, which must be kept."

"With her ladyship, I suppose," muttered his visitor, bitterly. "You have been instructed by her?"

"That is a leading question," replied the detective, "and you must excuse my not answering it. You are clever, sir, very clever, but we are not quite fools in London. You forget this is a mere conversation, not a consultation."

"I cannot discover the difference."

"Your clients are more clearsighted, I suspect," said Mr. Meadows, "unless in the country you practice for the *mere pleasure* of practicing."

Marshall took the hint, and handed him a fee of five guineas—in his opinion a very handsome sum.

"And *now*," he said, "tell me, what would you advise?"

"The ruffian will doubtless attempt to quit the country," said Mr. Meadows, in a tone of deliberation, "and, let me see, yes, a ship sails from Liverpool for America at the end of the week."

"Had I better proceed there?" demanded the lawyer.

"It is my advice that you should do so."

"Will you accompany me?"

"I cannot."

"I will pay you handsomely."

"Of course," observed the detective; "but, unfortunately, I have more important business in hand, and cannot quit London for the present. In Liverpool you will find officers both intelligent and active, and criminal lawyers able and willing to assist you; but perhaps," he added, with a scarcely perceptible curl at the corners of his mouth, "you have lost some portion of your confidence in *country practice*."

Marshall mentally admitted that he had, and, after making a second fruitless attempt to induce Mr. Meadows to alter his determination and accompany him, took his leave.

"So," said the detective, as the door closed on his departing visitor, "for four days, at least, I am safe from any interference from that quarter—four days," he repeated, slowly; "many a fortune has been lost and won in half the time."

One hour afterwards Mr. Meadows quitted his offices to take his usual morning walk. Unlike the generality of mankind, his ideas rose quickly and freshly in the crowded streets.

[TO BE CONTIEUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE RESCUE.

A SKETCH OF PIONEER LIFE.

Mary Henderson sat alone and mused. Her children were sleeping soundly in their little bed, the fire-light showed their innocent faces rosy with the flush of health and slumber, and their soft breathing was the only sound that disturbed the unbroken stillness.

I said she was alone, for her sleeping little ones could scarcely be called companions, and her husband had been absent since the previous day. And the word alone, as applied to her, comprehended a deeper meaning than can be applied to it by the denizens of crowded cities. Save her little children she was not aware that a living human being was within many miles of the spot where her home stood.

The log cabin in which she lived, was situated in the very depths of the primeval forest. A small clearing surrounded it, and through the opening thus made, she could command a view of one of the broad inland lakes of what is now the State of New York, and on the farther shore of this beautiful sheet of water, she could, in a clear day, see the clearings and houses of a settlement, whose dwellers were her nearest neighbors.

At the head of the lake a small town was situated, and there her husband had gone the previous day to procure such stores of provisions and necessaries as were wanted to replenish the stock with which, on the previous autumn, he had supplied the cabin.

Mary Henderson had been reared among other and far different scenes. Her maiden life had been spent in one of the pleasant villages of New England, such as even then possessed advantages of society and the means of education remarkable in a comparatively newly settled country. Her father, one of the wealthiest men of the village, had allowed her the full use of these advantages, and at twenty, she was a refined, cultivated woman. And to a well stored mind she brought the aid of perfect health, and strength such as, in these degenerate times, would be unusual and, according to conventional standards, undesirable.

Nevertheless these fitted her well for the life she had chosen in promising to become the wife of Joseph Henderson. For several years she had known that on her marriage she would be introduced to the hardships of pioneer life. Joseph was poor, and he had determined to seek a home and competence in the Western wilds. He had selected the spot, commenced his clearing, built his cabin, and, in fact, had spent two seasons in it, before he made his last solitary journey to New England to seek his bride.

Mary's parents had sent her forth with many tears and blessings. The distance which can now be traversed in a few hours was then an almost interminable journey through pathless forests, where the trail of the hunter, and the blazed trees of some adventurous settlers, were often the only guides to the traveler's course. They scarcely hoped even to look again upon the face of their child, nor did she expect a speedy return. At the period at which our sketch opens she had already lived six years in her new home.

It was a lonely life, but she was less lonely when her little children filled the cabin with the music of their merry voices. With them for companions, she could more cheerfully see her husband go forth to his daily toil. And even when he undertook the necessary journeys to the settlement, instead of accompanying him, or going across the lake to spend the time of his absence with her neighbors there, she was content to remain with her children in their home.

Hitherto no annoyance of any kind had ever been experienced. The days were occupied with her cares and labors, and at night, with the rude door and windows of her dwelling securely fastened, she felt no fear.

There were Indians, the remains of one of the once powerful tribes of the Six Nations, in her neighborhood, but none had ever visited her but with friendly intent. Their dusky forms often glided into her cabin door, and with a grave salutation to the "good white squaw," they would sit down by her fireside. They brought presents of their rude handiwork to the little ones, and to herself the fruits of the chase, accepting food in return, and trinkets, such as she had to bestow. She fully trusted these savage visitors, looking upon them as her friends. Her only fear was of the wolves, whose distant howls occasionally came to her ear through the deep silence of the night.

She had expected her husband's return that night, but when night fell without bringing his presence, she felt an unusual oppression of sadness stealing over her. And, as she sat by her fireside, watching her sleeping children, her thoughts went back to the dear old home she had left, to the white-haired parents she scarcely hoped ever again to see, to the brothers and sisters who had sported with her beneath the overhanging maples, and gathered with her at the evening and the morning devotions of the household; and to all the companions and friends of her happy youth. They were scattered now; some the grave had claimed, some had gone down into the stormy ocean, some had borne deep sorrows, and for all she had a tender, reverent memory, as for those loved and lost forever.

Out of this tender reverie a fearful sound aroused her. Simultaneously, into the still night air, rose the fierce yells of a score of infuriated savages, and at the same instant heavy blows assailed the stout oaken and iron-bound door.

To gather her children in her arms and ascend to the loft above, was but the work of an instant. The little ones, awakened by the fearful din, added their cries of terror, but a word and a caress quieted them. Laying them upon a rude bed, she descended again, and seizing the rifle with its powder-horn and bullet-pouch that always hung ready for instant use, she returned.

The loft, as was usual in the structures of those times, projected over the lower story of the dwelling, and in the stout beam that formed this projection, holes had been pierced, through which, in an emergency like this, a gun could be fired.

Taking her station at one of these, the heroic woman resolved to defend her children till her latest breath. With deadly aim she discharged her gun, and the foremost of the howling demons below fell silently to the earth, his brain pierced by the ball. Again and again she loaded and fired, some wounded limped away, some fell in agonies, some lay stark and stiff upon the snow, the winter moonlight falling upon their upturned, painted faces.

Seven had been killed or disabled, and she still unharmed, before the Indians withdrew to the cover of the woods that belted the clearing. She hoped they had finally withdrawn, or, at least, that the firing having aroused the inhabitants of the settlement across the lake, she should have speedy assistance. Indeed, as she looked out over the broad, ice-bound surface of the lake, she fancied the could already perceive dark forms moving upon it, and hope grew strong within her breast.

It was but of short continuance however, for even while she watched the lake the savages stealthily returned, making a detour to avoid her observation, and gathered about the house. Their whispering voices first warned her of their presence, and almost immediately after a thin, blue smoke wreath curled through every crevice of the logs above the door of entrance. The Indians, unable by any weapons they possessed to break down the stout door, had resolved to burn it, and for that purpose had silently heaped against it a huge pile of brush and wood.

Hope died out again in the woman's heart. Save that door, which the flames were already licking, and which was guarded by her savage foes, made ten times more furious by her resistance, there was no mode of egress from her dwelling. And if even she should succeed in leaving the house with her children, it would be hopeless, thus burdened, to hope to escape from her swift-footed pursuers.

As soon as the fire had been kindled, the savages had again retired to a safe distance. Her only hope now lay in the dark forms, which she could now more distinctly perceive upon the surface of the lake. Should they arrive before the fire had so far obtained mastery over her defenses as to allow the savages to enter, she might still be saved. But they were yet a long way off.

The savages also saw them, as she perceived, as occasionally one of their dusky figures stole out from the shelter of a tree, and pointing in the direction of the lake, slunk back again.

Meanwhile, minute by minute, the power of the flames increased. The smoke, rolling in thick masses, filled the loft, blinding and suffocating the fugitives. The crackling of the timbers announced that ere long the door would give way.

Mary knew that soon she must be at the mercy of her foes. Clasping her children in her arms, and kneeling, she waited, praying to Him who alone had power to aid her in this supreme hour of trial, for deliverance.

Ere long she knew that all was lost. The door had given way, and the savages, with fierce yells, had burst into the lower apartment. She had taken the precaution to draw up after her the rude ladder by which she ascended, but its absence formed slight hindrance to the Indians. Scarcely a moment elapsed ere a huge savage came climbing up the logs, his head peering through the opening in the floor. Mary's rifle was ready. She fired; and with a groan he dropped to the floor below. But ere she had time to re-load another had taken his place. Rude hands seized her shrinking form, others clasped her children, and presently, she knew not how, she found herself traversing the forest, surrounded by a band of Indians, hideous in their war-paint.

All night the party sped on. Mary carried her littte son of two years in her arms, and her daughter of four years, clinging to her gown, ran by her side. As morning dawned she found herself unable to proceed, thus burdened, at the required pace. One of the Indians attempted to take the child from her arms. He resisted, with loud cries, and the infuriated savage, snatching him away, swung him round, and striking his head against the trunk of a tree, threw him lifeless upon the ground, while the rest goaded the unhappy mother onward.

There, a few hours later, Joseph Henderson, with a party of friends, following upon the Indian trail, found the child, his bright curls dabbled in his blood, and his little hands still clenched in terror.

All that day the Indians hastened onward without rest, and their pursuers followed, still without gaining much upon them. At night the Indians encamped, and having given their prisoners some food, and bound Mary to a tree, they prepared to enjoy the contents of a keg of rum, which they had stolen from Joseph Henderson's house.

Mary's arms were free, and with them she clasped her child to her breast. Wearied as she was, no sleep visited her eyes. Her fate was too full of horror to allow her repose; and while the child slumbered, she watched the orgies of her captors, and thought of all that had passed within the circle of scarcely less than twenty-four hours; of her husband's despair when he should return to his desolated home; of her murdered little one, and of the probable pursuit, which she prayed might result in her deliverance before her enemies had time to reach their fort. She knew they, too, calculated upon pursuit, but believed they had so far outstripped their pursuers as to be beyond danger.

One by one the savages sank into a drunken slumber, till, besides herself, there was no waking soul in the encampment. The deep silence of the hour brooded over all things. The late winter dawn was beginning to gild the tree tops, and she knew that ere long she must resume her march, when a sound caught her ear as of a cautious tread upon the dried twigs that strewed the ground. She turned, and at that instant a glittering knife fell at her feet! Oh! blessed moment of deliverance. Her friends were near, and she might yet be saved!

With trembling hand she severed the cords that bound her. With slow and silent, but painful motion, she rose to her feet. A savage stirred, uttering a deep growl, and she sunk down again. Minutes of breathless suspense followed ere she rose again, and, with her child in her arms, glided out of the circle of light caused by the fire, into the darkness beyond. In equal silence a strong arm was thrown about her waist, and she felt herself borne swiftly away, while the crack of rifles and the yells of the borderers told the fearful vengeance they were taking upon the surprised and stupefied savages. Not one of the miscreants escaped.

Oh, what a meeting was that between husband and wife! What deep joy and reverent gratitude for the deliverance of the captives, mingled with sorrow for the sweet young life so ruthlessly destroyed, they bore to their home!

The party stayed to bury the body of the dead child in the deep woods; and then carrying Mary and her little daughter upon a litter of pine boughs, they hastened onward to the settlement. Joseph Henderson's house, a blackened ruin, was of course deserted. The family remained for the winter in the settlement beyond the lake. In the spring they again rebuilt their home.

No further molestation reached them. The advancing tide of emigration soon drove the savages from that region. Settlements sprang up at short distances, forests disappeared, towns grew into importance, and the site of the cabin that Mary Henderson so nobly defended is now the center of a flourishing and populous inland city.

There, with the din of traffic sounding in their ears, with the shriek of the locomotive, and the thunder of its speed, hourly rousing the dwellers into intense life, the descendants of this brave woman still live, and love to repeat to their children the story of her courageous defense of her home, her captivity, and her happy rescue.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A NIGHT OF SMUGGLING.

BY AN OLD "SALT."

"You have been in Gibraltar," said one of my sailor acquaintances, some years ago; "and you must remember those Spanish dandies who used to stand in the public places, with bright-colored jackets, broad-brimmed hats and rows of round buttons and little ribbons down the seams of their trowsers. Did you ever know who they are?" "I have heard they were Spanish smugglers." "That is true." "But how could that be? How dare they come into the garrison in open day, and return across the Spanish lines, if they were known?" "That, indeed, I cannot answer. I know, however, that they were smugglers; and I know it by rather too intimate acquaintance. I will tell you an adventure I had with them.

"I was in Gibraltar, in command of a vessel from New York; and I made a bargain with one of these same tall, fine-looking fellows, with his broad-brimmed hat, green jacket, bright-yellow breeches, gaiters, rows of bell-buttons and little ribbons;—I made a bargain with him, for my whole stock of tobacco, at a high price—a very handsome price—only I was to deliver it at a certain place on the coast, a few miles west of Cabreta Point. Well, I didn't think much about danger; in fact I didn't know nor care much about it. I felt quite bold; and probably Spanish brandy had something to do with it, for I drank more or less every day.

"A little after dusk I started in the long-boat. I had got ready a leg-of-mutton sail in the course of the day, and had the tobacco stowed away, and set off with a fair wind. Whether I was bound to Algesiras or not, it was nobody's business on board the foreign vessels I passed. I steered across the bay at first, as if for that place; but soon altered my course, doubled Cabreta Point, and then hugged the shore down along the Straits. I had some difficulty in finding the place where I was to land my tobacco; and, when I reached it, I didn't wait for signals nor friends; but hauled up to the shore, and landed. All was still; but I saw a fine white horse standing back among the trees, with a handsome Spanish saddle on his back, and the next moment an officer stepped out from the rocks, and hailed me. I didn't know what he said; but I saw well enough what a predicament we had got into. He was in uniform, and fully armed. I knew he was a custom-house officer, or *Guarda-costa*, as they call them; and supposed his men must be near, so that not a moment was to be lost. I sprung right upon him, and seized him by the wrists, so that he should not be able to draw his pistols, which were quite convenient, stuck in the belt round his waist. It made me think of taking hold of a lobster, so as to keep him from using his claws. My mate, who was near me, seeing how matters stood, ran to the boat and brought an oar, and gave him one blow on the back of his neck; when I immediately felt that he had got enough. He stopped struggling; and, as I found he did not recover himself, I let him sink down to the ground, where he lay without moving. I then hurried the tobacco out of the boat, carried it up to some rocks where I had agreed to put it, in a kind of a cave that had been described to me, and then jumped in and pushed off and rowed back to Gibraltar.

"I got my pay; but it was soon spent, and what I bought with it I have long ago forgotten. But I never can forget the *Guarda-costa*. He was the only man I ever killed; and I sometimes think I would give a great deal if I never had done it. He was a handsome young man, was doing his duty, and I got no real good by that night's work. I might have kept out of the business if it hadn't been for the brandy; but there is no reflecting, no good judgment in me when I have been drinking. No man with his senses would have been likely to take up such a business as I did then. However, I did not give up drinking on that account; but I kept at it; and, not long after, a gale of wind came on, and I lost my vessel on the beach, where she was driven and wrecked. They said it was owing to my drinking; but I wasn't more drunk that night than common; and I never lost a vessel before.

"Perhaps one reason why I drank as much as I did was, because it helped me to forget my *night of smuggling*."

LONDON TALK.

Dr. Johnson used to say that there were "few things pleasanter than the full flow of London talk." But talk, to have a "full flow," or any "flow" at all, must have something in it. To speak of the full flow of what is generally called talk would be like speaking of the full flow of emptiness, of froth, of nothing. What Johnson called "talk" we have a sample of in Boswell and Hawksworth. It ranged over the whole field of history and literature. It elevated and generalized the most trifling things into philosophy. It was rich with thought and sparkling with wit. Nothing was too high or too grave for it, while it kept the free, natural and playful tone, without which conversation at once loses its charm. The table-talk of Dr. Johnson will be read when his Dictionary is obsolete, and even the Rambler and Idler are left to the seldom-disturbed occupation of moths and spiders.

THE HAUNTED LOVER.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

——"Then came wand'ring by
A shadow like an angel." SHAKESPEARE.

Not always—yet how better could I hear
That she should never leave me than come thus,
Whene'er my spirit might know joy or peace,
To hurl it shivering to its midnight cell.

* * * * * *

And she is beautiful—ay, beautiful
As the first glimpses of a dream of love
In some young poet's Fairy-land! Her eye
Is an unfathomed glory! and her life
A maddening sweetness! She is beautiful—
And yet her beauty is more fearful far
To my guilt-burning heart and shrinking gaze
Than could be any hideous shape sent forth
From the dense dark of the eternal prison.

* * * * * *

I watched a moonrise on the sea
And dreamed myself in Fairy-land;
My heart was gone awhile to be
At rest on an Elysian strand;—
But a wild'ring shape of beauty from
The silent Empire of the Dead
Passed slowly o'er the pearly cloud,
And mockingly inclined its head!
I heard the wings of Midnight rush
To bear the black weight of the storm
Across the Alps! and felt a gush
Of frenzied joy—but that bright form,
In the fiery flash of lightnings moved
Along the bursting thunder-cloud,
Sent thro' my heart one burning gaze,
Writhed a slow, scornful smile and bowed!

* * * * * *

Beside the Rhine! In ruined towers
I met the spirits of the winds
That sang and died in feudal hours—
Oh, how their haunted magic binds!
Thro' the clasping ivy-vines I gazed,
And, by a column lone and gray
She leant—I felt a frenzied chill,
And veiled my eyes and fled away.

* * * * * *

In *Italy!* Sweet skies above,
Fair flowers and glorious graves below—
The land of loveliness and love,
The land of ruin and of woe—
There in Egeria's storied haunt,
While dreams of softness gathered fast—
One brighter than the nympth of old
I saw—and shuddered as she passed.

* * * * * *

Upon Zahara's burning waste
Whene'er a green spot met mine eye,
And my scorched lip was bent to taste
The cooling stream—*she* glided by!
Where the twilight of the ages gloams
O'er temples under Grecian skies,
Amid the Orient's myrtle stems,
The Arctic ice, she still would rise!

* * * * * *

I stood by Jordan's sacred stream—
And *she* was gazing from its deep,
And, in a burning glory-dream
Of God and Heaven, on Sinai's steep,
I saw her pass o'er the solemn sky—
Why had she come to haunt me *there*?
When will her fearful beauty cease
To darken earth, sea, sky and air?

THE MARTYRED WIFE.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

Prominent in that great revolution of nearly half a century ago, by which the oppressed and down-trodden natives of Columbia sought to free themselves from the miseries of Spanish rule, as exercised by the blood-thirsty minions of the corrupt and tyrannical Ferdinand VII., was one General Don Jose de Fernandez, who, finding himself and compatriots very likely to be overthrown, took refuge far in the interior of the country, leaving behind him a young and beautiful wife and infant child.

About this period, as if to increase the horrors of that distracted country, those memorable earthquakes occurred which destroyed so many cities and villages, and filled the hearts of the survivors with trembling awe, at what they believed to be a special visitation of displeasure of the Almighty. Of this the clergy took advantage, and hurled their anathemas against the rebellious horde, who had dared to take up arms against the rightful power and rule of the Lord's annointed; and so effectually did they work upon the superstition of the natives of the soil, that, believing they were fighting against both God and man, they hailed with delight the amnesty offered by the Royalists, laid down their arms, and once more came under the yoke of subjection; when, finding themselves again established in power, the revengeful and blood-thirsty rulers began a series of oppressions, persecutions, and cruelties, as malignant as were ever recorded in the annals of civilization.

Among those who had accepted this amnesty, and returned to the bosom of his family in Caracas, was the young and valiant Don Jose de Fernandez. At first he seemed to be received with marked favor, and was permitted to take the oath of allegiance, under the belief that all his past errors were pardoned; but he soon learned, through an anonymous note sent to him, that his previous offenses were neither forgiven nor forgotten, and that the authorities were only awaiting a favorable moment, when his seizure could be effected with impunity, to make a terrible example of him, as one of those rebellious leaders whom at heart they hated as bitterly as ever.

To save himself from an ignominous death, Don Jose was advised to break his parole, and fly quickly, speedily, and far. He communicated the information to his wife, and urged her to take her infant and escape with him; but she, the most noble of her sex, knowing that the absence of all parties would at once arouse suspicion, resolved to remain, and thus by her presence deceive the authorities into the belief that he was still near, even while he should be making good his flight to a place of safety.

But while preparing for his escape, and before he had actually left his dwelling, an emissary of the revengeful Captain General appeared, to conduct him to headquarters, under the plea that he was wanted there for an examination.

The noble wife met the messenger at the threshold; and to his inquiries for her husband, she replied, that he had been suddenly taken ill, and was not then in a condition to bear removal; but that, so soon as able to be abroad, he would pay his respects to his Excellency.

This was simply an ingenious ruse, prompted by true affection, to account for his absence, and gain time for his escape. But the report which the officer made to his superior, produced a result which the noble woman had not anticipated; for, with a show of feeling, the Captain General immediately dispatched his confidential surgeon, Don Alfonso, to render Don Jose medical aid.

On the appearance of the old physician, the anxious and trembling wife took him aside and made him her confidant—revealed to him her entire plan for her husband's escape, and the reasons for the step she had taken. The doctor, unlike the officials with whom he was associated, was a man of feeling and principle, and he at once resolved to assist her, and, as far as lay in his power, furnish means for the escape of the young general, whom he both knew and respected.

To be brief, the plans of the two succeeded; and under cover of night, disguised as an old slave, Don Jose de Fernandez quietly left the city for parts unknown.

On his return to the palace, the old surgeon reported that his patient was out of danger, (which he was in truth,) and that there was consequently no further need of his services.

A few days elapsed, and Donna Manuela received intelligence of the safety of her husband. He had made his way to the sea-coast, and embarked for Curazao, a place of safety, where he should anxiously await the arrival of his beloved companion.

But what could Donna Manuela do, alone, surrounded by official enemies and government spies, and with an infant in her arms? how hope to reach the sea-coast in safety with her child? and to whom could she confide the secret of her husband's place of refuge? No! for the present she must remain, and abide the consequences; but alas! she little dreamed how terrible they were destined to prove.

When it became known that Don Jose had really effected his escape, the rage of Monteverde, the Captain General, knew no bounds. Supreme in authority, he had but to command to be obeyed. His first infamous order caused the arrest and immediate execution of the officer who had brought him the false intelligence of the illness of the fugitive; his second consigned to the deepest and darkest dungeon, his tried and faithful surgeon, who had been on his staff and was considered one of his household.

In prison, branded as a vile traitor in league with rebels, the humane and faithful old surgeon was put to the torture, and every means which infernal ingenuity could devise was resorted to to wring from him a confession involving his accomplices. But the good doctor, having had no accomplices, had nothing to confess, and consequently the inhuman efforts of his merciless superior were without avail. Then followed his condemnation; and he was rudely dragged back to his chains, to await the hour of his public execution.

The tragic day soon came. The morning of the 16th of June, 18—, rose as fair to the view as if no hellish deeds were about to be perpetrated beneath its peaceful light. At an early hour all were astir at the palace and throughout the city. The Captain General appeared in full uniform, sparkling with brilliant decorations, the insignia of many a hotly contested field. The guards were doubled, and all the avenues leading to the entrance of the palace were strictly watched. Aids-de-camp went dashing hither and thither, conveying orders of vigilance to the commanders at different points. It was feared the natives would again break out in another terrible rebellion, and all connected with royalty were on the alert for danger.

As the day wore on, and the crowd began to collect in front of the prison in the Cathedral square, where the execution was to take place, low murmurs and whispers were heard among them. The good doctor was beloved by the army and all who knew him, and there was no telling what turn affairs might take. The rabble, as they were styled, soon filled the streets and almost obstructed them. The officer of the day cleared the avenues, and placed batteries in the cross-streets to sweep them in case of necessity, while lines of infantry stood with bristling bayonets ready to charge, and squads of cavalry hovered in the rear, prepared for a quick and furious onset. All was thus made ready for the bloody scene about to open.

Slowly, as the deep and heavy bell solemnly tolled the fatal hour, the victim of tyranny, almost broken down by the physical sufferings he had undergone, was led forth, to the beat of the muffled drum, toward the place of execution, a priest walking on either side of him, and either offering him spiritual consolation, or beseeching him to make a full confession ere the fatal moment should arrive. A few minutes later he was seated upon the bench where he was to meet his untimely fate, with a file of soldiers drawn up before him, ready for their work of death, and awaiting in breathless silence the signal of their superior to pour in their volley and set his noble spirit free.

At this critical moment, when all was hushed expectation, and every eye was turned with anxious gaze, either upon the prisoner or him who held his life in his hands, a low murmur of many voices was heard, followed by a slight swaying to and fro of the human mass that blocked up the rear; and then suddenly, to the amazement of all, a human figure, closely muffled in a cloak, burst upon the scene, and, rushing to the prisoner, sunk down upon the ground before him. Instantly an officer sprung forward and seized the intruder, when the long cloak dropping from her head and shoulders, disclosed to the astonished spectators no less a personage than the young and beautiful wife of the fugitive General Don Jose de Fernandez, who suddenly and almost wildly exclaimed:

"Save him, for the love of Heaven! oh, save the good Don Alfonso! He is innocent—I alone am guilty—and upon my head let your vengeance be visited!"

But the prayer of this lovely and noble being was unheeded.

"Away, vile wretch, to the dungeon to where you belong! and seek not to interfere with the administration of justice!" cried the enraged official, who immediately gave orders to have her removed to prison.

As the poor lady was being dragged, moaning and sobbing, from the presence of him who had saved the life of her husband at the expense of his own, the fatal signal was given. Instantly there came a deep and heavy roll of the drum, then a heavier roll of musketry, and the noble victim fell forward on his face, a bleeding and ghastly corpse.

A few hours later that heroic and devoted wife was dragged, half-fainting, from her dungeon to the *Sala del Audiencia*, or Chamber of Audience, and there confronted with her most bitter foe, the vile and blood-thirsty Monteverde. He questioned her sharply, and swore she must either confess who were her accomplices, or be herself sent to the rack.

In vain the poor lady protested that she had no accomplices—that what she had done she had done alone, with no other motive than for the salvation of him whom she loved—the husband of her bosom—the father of her child. The Captain General would not believe her tale, but pronounced her a vile traitoress, more deserving of death than he who had just been punished; and at length, foaming with wrath at finding himself baffled, he exclaimed—

"Away with her to the vaults of the Inquisition! and put every engine into requisition, to make her disclose the vile secrets of her damnable heart!"

This mandate was obeyed by his willing minions, and soon the awful rack almost tore asunder her delicate limbs, but it forced from her no new confessions, because she had nothing more to reveal.

Finding himself still baffled, Monteverde gave orders that she should be again brought into his presence, and scourged to the death.

"And ere she dies," he exclaimed in fury, "let her infant rebel be brought and put to death before her, that I may wring her stubborn heart, if indeed it have one touch of maternal feeling!"

Bleeding, fainting, more dead than alive, the poor lady was again dragged before the monster, and having been partially revived by some restoratives, which the attending physician administered, she was again questioned. But to no effect. Her child was next produced, innocently prattling in the arms of its colored nurse. On perceiving her infant, Donna Manuela became nearly frantic.

"Oh, merciful God! my child! my child!" she cried; "what do you with my child! oh, give it me! give it me! poor little innocent!"

"Speak! confess!" said Monteverde, "and the child shall be placed in your arms unharmed, and yourself go free; refuse to disclose what you know of this vile treason, and the infant shall be brained and cast at your feet!"

This failing to produce the desired result, for the reasons already stated, the Captain General ordered the nurse and child to be sent to prison, and the poor mother to be scourged to death.

Let us not dwell upon the horrid scene. The executioner was sent for, and La Senora Manuela being stripped to the waist before her inhuman tormentors, the last cruel work was begun. Under the first dozen lashes she began to droop; the second dozen left her scarcely life; and as the executioner paused in his work of butchery, and the physician examined the pulse and features of the pale and bleeding victim, her quivering and now livid lips were seen to move.

"She is about to confess!" cried one.

"Hark! listen! lose not a sentence!" cried the anxious Monteverde.

The lips again moved, and low, but distinctly, issued the words, which filled more than one heart with rage—

"*Viva la patria! mueren los tiranos!*" "Long live the country! death to the tyrants!"

The Captain General swore a terrible oath, and gnashing his teeth, and fiercely twirling his long moustache, he shouted, above the howl of rage and disappointment which greeted her answer—

"In the name of the Infernal! madam, where have you concealed your traitorous husband?"

Straightening up her bleeding and lacerated form, turning her soft, dark eyes, with a fierce, lofty look, full upon her merciless interrogator, and suddenly wrenching both arms from the attendants who held her, and bringing both up with convulsive force to her breaking heart, the Spartan wife and mother exclaimed, in a wild, thrilling tone—

"*Here! in this heart! whose last throb is for him!*"

These were the last words that ever passed her noble lips, and as she uttered them, her spirit suddenly took its eternal flight, and her frail, delicate body sunk to the ground a bleeding corpse.

They raised the body from the floor and examined it carefully; but when it was found that death had snatched from them their victim, and the Captain General saw he had been foiled in his hellish designs, he spurned the bleeding and lacerated body with his foot, exclaiming—

"A curse upon such contumacy! May this be the fate of the whole treacherous horde! Bear forth the detestable carcass, and let none dare pollute the earth by giving it Christian burial."

Among the spectators of this barbarous scene, there was one officer who stood with folded arms, and silently watched the issue of the murderous transaction; and as the body of the martyred lady was being removed, he hurriedly unbuckled his sword, hurled it at the feet of the bloody tyrant, and swore he would never more wear it to disgrace the name of a Spanish soldier. Suddenly plunging into the crowd, this man escaped, and making his way through the lines to the sea-coast, he joined the fugitive husband, to whom he recounted the atrocious deed. Together, then, these two men took a solemn oath of vengeance, and together they plotted the downfall of their inhuman oppressors. Fortune favored them. Another rebellion broke out, and after various reverses, they marched as conquerors to the capital, taking deep and terrible vengeance upon all who had wronged them.

The foregoing may be relied upon as strictly authentic. The friend who related to us the tragic incident, was for many years a resident of South America, and subsequently became acquainted with both the father and child, the latter then grown to man's estate. From the lips of General Don Jose de Fernandez himself, now a venerable hero, he received the thrilling story which he detailed to us, and which, in turn, we have so briefly laid before the reader.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

A SKETCH FOR MEN OF INFLUENCE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

The court had adjourned, and some of the leading members of the bar were assembled at the residence of Judge Worthington, who had presided at the session. There were several youthful lawyers present, beside some who were not connected with the legal profession. The conversation had turned upon social themes, and many words were spoken without much sense or meaning.

"We have but one life to live here on earth, and we must make the most of it," said Worthington, allowing his warm social feelings to rule his speech.

"That's so," responded some half dozen, in chorus, who were ready to applaud anything the old judge might say.

"Give me joy to-day, and let the morrow take care of itself," resumed our host, in hilarious tones.

And again was he thoughtlessly sustained. But one white-haired man remained silent and sober. This was Lemuel Beekman, one of the finest lawyers in the State, and one of the noblest hearted men. Beekman's life had been a sad one, and part of his story was known to all of us. He was born in Virginia, and at the age of eighteenhe had graduated, and was admitted to the bar at twenty-one. A few years he retained his position, and then he fell. He became a drunkard of the most abject kind, nor did he fully recover his manhood until the silver touch of age was upon his head. Now, however, he was as firm as a rock in the way of Right, and no power could move him to temptation.

"Judge Worthington," said Beekman, in an earnest, solemn tone, "you do not mean what you say."

"Yes—I mean exactly what I say," replied the judge. "Give me joy for to-day."

"But you do not mean what your words would seem to convey," persisted the old lawyer, in the same earnest, serious tone. "You are impressing the minds of several young men who are present, and I am sure the lesson you have just let fall from your lips is not one which you would give to a son whom you were about to send out into the world."

At first Worthington seemed inclined to be offended at this freedom, but gradually his good nature came back, and he asked Beekman what he meant.

"I'll tell you what I mean," replied the old man, "and I know you will pardon me for the liberty I take, when I assure you that I do it for the good of those about me."

All eyes were at once turned upon the speaker, for his tones were solemn, and there was a gathering moisture in his eye which told of feelings deep and powerful.

"Few men are aware," he said, "of the vast influence which words, lightly spoken, may sometimes have, and especially when they come from the lips of those who occupy stations of trust and honor. Every man must exert some influence, and he may make that influence good or bad, as he will. But it unfortunately happens that most of the bad influence which comes from those who are right at heart, proceeds from deeds of thoughtlessness, or from words spoken without any real intent or meaning. I will tell you the story of my first fatal fall, and you may then know what I mean.

"When I was twenty-two years of age, I had settled in Hanover county, and was doing a good business. I was flattered on all hands, and my circle of acquaintance was as respectable as it was extensive. But in the midst of all those blooming flowers and buds of promise of my youth, there lurked one enemy. I did not fully realize his power then, but there was one who did. My widowed mother saw my danger, and she warned me of it. 'Lemuel,' she said to me—and she said it many times—said it with tears and prayers—'you are not safe while you tamper with the wine-cup. You are not like others of your acquaintance. You have a constitutional inability to use wine moderately. You inherit it from your father. If you do not cut off the habit entirely and forever, it will surely work your ruin.' And then she would beg of me to give her my pledge that I would touch it no more. Had I given my mother that pledge I should never have broken it; but I could not do it then. I could not meet my friends in the district, and refuse the social glass. I told her I would not carry it to excess, but she only shook her head, and replied that I had no power over an appetite which I dared not wholly conquer.

"Time went on, and I continued to attend to my increasing business, but I was becoming more and more a slave to the cup. I could see it plainly. I often became wholly intoxicated at night, after the court session was over, but my friends put me to bed, and not many knew of my weakness. My mother saw it, however, and she still plead with me. Finally she made arrangements to go on a visit to New York, and before she went she labored with me once more. There was a court to be holden some fifteen miles distant, at which it was necessary I should attend, and on the very next morning my mother was to start. I knew that I should not be able to return in season to see her off, but I promised to meet her at a certain point on the river, where she would have to stop, and which I could reach without trouble. Before I left her that day, she once more urged me to give her the pledge she had labored for so long. 'If you give it to me, I shall feel safe,' she said, 'for I know, as I know Heaven itself, that my son would not break a solemn promise given to his mother!' And she was right there. Had I given that promise, no power could have swerved me from the faith.

"But I would not give it then. I knew that when I once spoke the word my social fate would be fixed, and I hesitated. Finally I gave my mother this promise: Said I, 'when I meet you tomorrow morning, I will give you my final answer. I will be resolved upon the question.' She saw the sparkle of my eye, and she was content. She made me promise for the twentieth time not to fail of seeing her, and then I left her. I rode alone to the distant court-house, and on the way I pondered over the subject I had in hand. I knew that my course was a dangerous one—I knew that there was no safety for me while I tampered with the enemy. A hundred times had I firmly resolved that I would only drink a few social glasses with my friends, and then stop; but almost as often had I drank on until sense and reason were gone. I brought up all the social pleasures, all the joy and hilarity of the convivial circle, and all the troubles I should have to encounter in refusing to join in the revelry, and then against these I put the safety of myself, and the happiness and peace of my mother. This last consideration carried the day, and before I reached my journey's end I had resolved that I would give my mother the pledge. Oh! would that I had thus made up my mind before I left her that morning! Would to God I had taken the pledge then. But I felt not the danger which a few short hours of hesitation can beget. I had come to a conclusion to do right on the following morning. I did not think how much better it might be to commence then.

"The business of the day was done, and in the evening we were assembled in the parlor of the tavern. I had not drank during the session, for I meant to see my mother with a clear head. I did not feel that I was cut off yet by my resolution, for though the die was cast, yet there was a term of limit which had not expired. In short, I had only resolved that my mother should have the pledge, and until that time I felt that I was my own master.

"The name of our presiding judge was Rowland. He was an old man, much honored and respected, and looked up to by all the younger members of the bar with respect and confidence. He was present in the parlor, and as the weight of the woolsack was removed, he became jolly and humorous.

"'Let cares and sorrows take care of themselves!' he said, at the same time tossing off a glass of wine. I shall never forget his words, for I caught them with a strange avidity, and the devil of appetite within me kept them echoing in my ears. 'Why should we make it night, when we can make it day just as well?' the old judge added, with a happy smile. '*Give me joy while I live, and when I must be sad let me die.*' '*A short life and a merry one before a long life and a sad one.*'

"Such were some of the thoughtless, meaningless sentences that fell from his lips, but they had a quick and deep impression upon me. I caught the dangerous inspiration—my soul felt the old flame—and I grasped the wine-cup with a strange enthusiasm. Those few words from the lips of one whose position I honored, spoken at random as they were, turned me about in my track. Could I have gone on till the next morning, and given my mother that sacred promise, all might have been well; but I joined in the wassail with a reckless zest—we drank and played till a late hour—drank till I knew no reason—drank till I was helpless and senseless. When I came to myself the night had passed, and another day was far advanced. I bathed my fevered brow—swallowed a glass of spirits to bring back my scattered energies—and then hurried off to meet my mother. But I was too late. The vessel had been gone over three hours when I got there, and I was informed that the captain had waited an hour for me at that.

"I returned to my home, and never saw mother again! She died in New York from a sudden sickness, and I was left alone. Oh! how many times did I wish I had only given her that promise, for I should surely have kept it. There is a mystery in this appetite for wine which I cannot fathom. I was too weak to conquer it alone, and I sank. I sank till I was poor and degraded, and there I remained for years, an object of pity to my friends, and a subject of scorn to those who had never known me before. You all know the sad story of my degradation, and I need not repeat it. I can only say that help came at length. It came to me in a dream, in which my mother appeared, and I gave her the pledge. I bowed my gray head and solemnly promised her, believing that her spirit was near me, that I would be a man once more. I have kept the pledge, and I will keep it while I live.

"And," added the old man, with much feeling, "I will never let fall from my lips a word which can lend its influence for evil, if I have sense to know it at the time. Looking upon the speech of an old man as something which may have influence, one way or the other, I will try that from me it shall be only good. Light words and light actions may seem to pass harmlessly away, but many a man, wrecked and ruined upon the sea of life, can call to mind some slight event of the past—perhaps only a word—which gave a false direction to his compass, and led him away from his true course.

"Forgive me, gentlemen, for interrupting you. I have spoken only what I believed to be true, and I trust I have not offended."

Judge Worthington was the first to rise to his feet. He grasped the old man by the hand, and having thanked him for the lesson he had given, he turned to the younger members of the company.

"Beekman is right," he said. "Forget the words you heard me speak, and remember the counsel he has given. I, at least, will remember it, and I hope I may live up to it."

ANCIENT TABLE CUSTOMS.

The ancients set us a good example in the improvement of the time occupied in taking their repasts. There was always something to excite and gratify the higher nature, while the animal man was refreshed with good cheer. Music and the relation of stories were the accomplishments of the feast, whether domestic or special, as early as the time of Homer, of which the tables of Alcinous, Menelaus and Eumaeus may be taken as examples. Among the later Greeks the *Skolia*, short songs adapted to be sung at repasts, were the product of the same propensity to combine the pleasures of intellect and taste with those of appetite. Some of these were exquisitely beautiful, and what is more surprising, for the times, they are almost all characterised by a high and pure moral tone. Some of them clothe in verse a patriotic sentiment or commemorate the name of some illustrious hero or martyr of liberty. Others enounce an ethical sentiment, such as the shortness of life, the vanity of human pursuits, the transitoriness of sensual pleasure, and the like. "The very *Skolia* or drinking catches of the Greeks," says Bishop Hurd, "were seasoned with a moral turn; the sallies of pleasantry, which escaped them in their freest hours, being tempered, for the most part, by some strokes of the national sobriety." "During the course of their entertainments," says Athenaeus, "they loved to hear, from some wise and prudent person, an agreeable song; and those songs were held by them most agreeable, which contained exhortations to virtue, or other instructions relative to their conduct in life." The sublime ode of Aristotle "To Virtue," was a *Skolium* or dinner-song.

The Spartans were content to season their frugal repasts of black porridge with concise apothegm and sharp repartee. In fact, the public dining-room was one of the most effective places of Spartan education.

The grave Roman had his *reader* (anagnostes) generally a highly educated and accomplished slave, who had been formed by an expensive training in elocution, to read in a graceful and effective manner. One of these was always present to read and thus suggest subjects at the family repast, of useful and entertaining conversation.

Nepos mentions it as one instance of the combined frugality and elegance of Atticus that his *anagnostes* were trained in his own family, that they were admirable readers, and that he never dined without having something read at table, that the mind of his guests, as well as their appetites, might be gratified, *for he only asked those to dine who were of like tastes with himself.*

A PATTERN FRIEND.

There are different modes of obligation, and different avenues to our gratitude and favor. A man may lend his countenance who will not part with his money, and open his mind to us who will not draw out his purse. How many ways are there, in which our peace may be assailed, besides actual want! How many comforts do we stand in need of, besides meat and drink and clothing! Is it nothing to "administer to a mind diseased"—to heal a wounded spirit? After all other difficulties are removed, we still want some one to bear with our infirmities, to impart our confidence to, to encourage us in our *hobbies* (nay, to get up and ride behind us) and to like us with all our faults. True friendship is self-love at second-hand; where, as in a flattering mirror, we see our virtues magnified and our errors softened, and where we may fancy our opinion of ourselves confirmed by an impartial and faithful witness. He (of all the world) creeps the closest in our bosoms, into our favor and esteem, who thinks of us most nearly as we do of ourselves. Such a one is indeed the pattern of a friend, another self—and our gratitude for the blessing is as sincere, as it is hollow in most other cases! This is one reason why entire friendship is scarcely to be found, except in love. There is a hardness and severity in our judgments of one another; the spirit of competition also intervenes, unless where there is too great an inequality of pretension or difference of taste to admit of mutual sympathy and respect; but a woman's vanity is interested in making the object of her choice the God of her idolatry; and in the intercourse with that sex, there is the finest balance and reflection of opposite and answering excellences imaginable!

PURSUIT OF PLEASURE.

We smile at the ignorance of the savage who cuts down the tree in order to reach its fruits, but the fact is, that a blunder of this description is made by every person who is over eager and impatient in the pursuit of pleasure. To such the present moment is everything, and the future is nothing; he borrows, therefore, from the future at a most usurious and ruinous interest; and the consequence is, that he finds the tone of his best feelings impaired, his self-respect diminished, his health of mind and body destroyed, and life reduced to its very dregs, at a time when, humanly speaking, the greater portion of its comforts should be still before him.

THE OATH OF FOLLY.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

"The king said unto the damsel, ask whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee."—MARK, VI., XXII.

The king had sworn. The dancer had her way.
Light heels, and lighter words.
What follow'd next?
The prompting of a vengeful woman's spite,
A lurid lamp in a dire dungeon cell,
An executioner with visage grim,
And as the fierce blast rends the lofty oak
Falls the imprisoned prophet.
It would seem
The king was sorry,—but for his oath's sake,
And from a craven fear of those who sate
With him at meat, he would not say her nay.
——False pride! mistaken honor!
Through their sway
The might of wickedness was dominant,
And malice triumphed.
Friend! if thou hast made
A vow of rashness, haste, absolve thyself.
Obtain forgiveness, seek release of those
Who hold the unwary promise.
Hear the voice
Of Israel's wisest monarch, and decline
To be another's surety, lest thou plunge
In ruin irretrievable.
'Twere sad
If sudden rashness of a thoughtless tongue
Should trouble and perplex our fellow men,
Uphold the wrong, sow discord, hide the truth,
Or hurt the soul.
'Twere better to be taught
Even by King Herod in his vanity,
Than compromise our peace and sanction guilt
And suffer loss, for sound of empty words.

A RIDE FOR LIFE;

or,

THE RANGER'S LEAP.

BY SAM C. REID, JR.

A chorus of wild laughter suddenly broke forth from a fierce, grotesque-looking set of men, who were indolently reclining on their blankets in different groups, around the fragments of what had evidently been their evening meal. It was in a secluded wood, far from any signs of habitation. Here and there were seen the smoldering embers of the camp fires, while around the groups were picketed a number of horses, grazing about in close familiarity with the men. At the trunks of trees, or hanging upon the limbs, were saddles and bridles, and other trappings, which showed that the camp was but a temporary one. Beside the men lay their rifles and guns, and from their slouched hats, long beards and moustaches, with knives and pistols in their belts, no wilder picture of a desperate and most ferocious set of Italian brigands could be conceived. They were men who slept in harness—ever with their armor on—and always ready for the fray. No tents shut out from them either the beauties of the night, or the peltings of the rain storm. They were men inured to every hardship, and by nature were fearless, chivalrous and romantic—in a word they were no brigands, but *Texas Rangers*.

It was while the little army of General Taylor was encamped at Camargo, on the river San Juan, making preparations for its advance to Monterey, that the company of scouting Rangers were most actively employed on secret service, piercing a hundred miles into the enemy's country at a time. Restless, energetic, and of wild adventurous spirits, they chafed when compelled to undergo the weariness of dull tame life in camp, and were only in their element when on the perilous scout. McCulloch and his men became notorious during the campaign of General Taylor for their hardihood, boldness, and daring; they were a remarkably constituted body, and among them were men of the highest ability, who have since attained distinguished positions in public life. Let the order for their services come when it would, at any hour of night or day, at a moment's warning they were ready in the saddle!

It was after a hard ride that the company had encamped late in the afternoon on the banks of Lake Guardado, a beautiful stream about two miles in length, and lined with large forest trees and thick underwood on one side, while opposite, from behind an entangled thicket of chaparrals, lay spread out a vast lawn of the richest verdure. It was at this charming spot where we have just described the scene of, and already presented the reader to, the temporary camp of the Rangers. The guard was posted, the men had attended to their horses—the first and most important duty with a Ranger—had bathed in the limpid waters of the lake, and having eaten their suppers, were now enjoying themselves stretched on their blankets. Some were taking a quiet nap—others were smoking their pipes—while a merry wag in one of the groups was relating an incident which occurred on the last scout, made at a far distant town called China, and which caused the loud burst of merriment, with which our story opens.

"I was so vexed," said the narrator, "that Col. Seguin and his men had escaped us, (with whom I had an old score to settle,) and to think the rascally old alcalde should have attempted to send out for a force to capture us that night, that I determined I would have it to say that I did'nt visit China without having seen at least one of the Chinese. So taking advantage of the little confusion which the false alarm had created, Aleton and myself stole over to the house of the old Alcalde, who kept the little store where we saw the two pretty women the morning we first arrived. Well, in searching the rooms up stairs we found the old rat stowed away in the arms of—*Mr. Murphy*, in apparent safety. Arousing the old dog, who was one of the fattest pieces of pomposity I ever saw, we gave him to understand that his safety depended upon complete silence, which was made more apparent by Aleton giving him a chance to peep down the barrel of his five-shooter. We then told him to divest himself of his light garments in order that we might have a representation of "Adam alone in the garden of Eden." The old rascal was forced to comply, but not without grinning and chattering like a monkey in a china shop. We then took a piece of cord, which we found in the room, and tied his hands behind him, drawing the cord over one of the rafters above, so as to bring his arms in such a position that he could not move without enduring great pain. Taking the brush from a marking-pot which we had found near the back door of the store, and which we had brought up with us for the purpose, I commenced to exercise my artistic talent by transforming the Mexican Alcalde into a regular John Chinaman, while Aleton made him keep his proper position, and forced him to submit to the metamorphosis. I first gave him a long cue behind, and then commenced imitating the Chinese figures on a tea chest, which stood in the room, on all parts of his body. The old fellow whined and remonstrated by making the most awful grimaces, and Aleton was so convulsed with laughter that I feared he might tremble off the pistol which he held in his hand. Having nearly finished him, I concluded I would give him a moustache, and taking the attitude of a painter with brush and palette in hand, I commenced making my fine limner touches, when the old wretch becoming exasperated beyond endurance, attempted to spit at me. Aleton brought down his pistol at him at once, and I finished him by giving him a huge imperial, painting his eyebrows, and drawing two large circles around his eyes. Could that scene have been drawn it would have eclipsed anything which the old *maestros* ever attempted! We crept back to camp unobserved, determined to keep the thing a profound secret; we found the men saddling up, and in a few moments we were all on our return march. I would have given a horse though," concluded the narrator, "if I could only have waited to see the fun which the discovery of the old Alcalde's position must have created when his friends came to his relief, for he commenced screaming for help as soon as we left."

The hearty peals of laughter had hardly ceased, at the relation of this incident, told much more graphically than we can possibly relate it, when the word of command "saddle up, men," was echoed through the camp. It was now about 8 o'clock, P. M. The sun had set angrily, a strong wind prevailed, and flying clouds were coursing through the heavens. The character of the present scout, from the unusual caution and preparations that were made, was known to be of a most important if not hazardous nature. Notwithstanding that the most unrestrained familiarity existed between McCulloch and his men, yet no one ever presumed to question him as to their destination at any time, neither did they care to know. It sufficed that they were always ready and willing to follow wherever he might lead. There were some shrewd surmises, however, on the part of some of the old Rangers, that it was not improbable on the present occasion but that they should have a brush with the celebrated Ranchero Chief, Canales, and his men. At all events, that there was to be fine sport ahead was confidently expected.

Their way now lay along a beautiful skirt of country, while far in the distance could be seen the sombre lay of the mountains, looking like a dark pile of clouds on the horizon. Scouting in one's own country, where the surface of it and every road and lane is familiar to you, is far different from running the gauntlet in that of an enemy, where all is strange and uncertain, with only maps and courses to be governed by. The conscious feeling that they might be ambuscaded, surprised, or cut off at any moment, kept the Rangers constantly on the *qui vive*, and they were consequently prepared for any stratagem or emergency. Their horses were fine animals, well trained to the service, and seemed perfectly conscious of the perilous duty they were called on to perform. It was in the superiority of their horses, indeed, that the Rangers principally depended for their safety. As an instance of the faithfulness of their horses, one of the Rangers, Harding, who was noted for his bold riding and recklessness, had a superior blooded animal, called "Miles." At night, when Harding would lie down at the picket camp, having been relieved from guard, he would tie the *cabestro*, or long halter, of his horse around his arm, and go to sleep. The horse, having browsed around him until satisfied, would approach his master, and, with the carefulness of a child, step over him first with one leg and then the other, and thus stand over him, as if for protection, until he awoke. Frequently, too, when Indians would hover about the camp, the horse would scent them, and from instinctive fear he would snort and rub his nose against his master's shoulder to awaken him.

The Rangers had ridden rapidly for about three hours, and the country around had become wild, rugged, and broken. The night was very dark, although the moon was now up, but it was so frequently obscured by heavy clouds that it was but momentary that its rays afforded any light. Crossing a deep ravine, their road led over some barren hills, across which the wind swept drearily in fitful gusts. The company rode on in double file until they passed through a gorge or defile in the hills, when, turning an angle in the road, a horseman suddenly approached at a rapid gait, who was immediately hailed and ordered to stop. A glance sufficed to show, dark as it was, that the rider was a stout, well-built Mexican, apparently well armed, and that he rode a fine horse. In answer to the challenge, however, instead of reining in his steed, he replied he had no time to stop, and sinking the rowels into his horse, dashed off at full speed from the road into the chapparal, finding that his advance was cut off. A dozen Rangers at once followed in pursuit; but so dense was the thorny thicket and entangled woods, that it was fearful riding, and the men's flesh became torn and scratched almost at every leap. On such occasions the Ranger always gives the rein to his horse, and leaning forward, lays with his head close to the neck of his animal. The Mexican, having a knowledge of the ground, had greatly the advantage, as well as having obtained the start in the race. He first attempted to circle the woods, so as to gain the road in the rear of the Rangers; but being made aware of their large force, he struck off to reach the road at a point higher up, as the only hope of making good his retreat. The man rode with desperation, while the Rangers were urging their horses to the top of their speed. The clatter of a shod horse upon the stones and gravel now told that the Mexican had gained the road, and the Texans followed at a break-neck pace. On they dashed at furious speed, when suddenly the Mexican's horse stumbled and fell. It was but for a moment, however, ere the horse recovered himself again, and his rider, firmly seated, spurred on for his life. But that was a precious moment in the fate of the Mexican, for the Rangers had gained rapidly on him, and now several shots were fired, but without effect. For another half mile the Mexican held his own, and at a turn in the road, with hopeless recklessness, again dashed into the chapparal.

Harding, who had been up in the lead with the Rangers, now kept the road, shouting to the men who followed in close pursuit of the Mexican, that he would keep on and head him off, knowing from the nature of the ground that the Mexican must soon leave the chapparal again for the road. But a few hundred yards ahead there was an immense ravine running across the road, of some eighty feet in depth, which at its narrowest part, about eighteen feet across, had once been bridged, but which now presented a yawning chasm. The Mexican knowing the ravine, had taken a small path through the chapparal which led down to a crossing. The Rangers, who were in hot pursuit, sped down the little path, which was very gradual in its descent, with the speed of lightning, when the impending danger to their comrade suddenly became apparent.

"Hold in, Harding, hold in—the ravine—the ravine!" they shouted, but it was too late. Harding was driving the rowels into his noble animal, and making the most fearful strides, when suddenly he found his steed gathering himself with desperate power, and horse and rider bounded into the air. The terrible leap was made. A long, loud, rumbling sound of earth and rock echoed through the deep abyss down below, bringing up with a terrible crash, and then all was still. "Great God," cried his comrades; "too late, he's lost!"

The Mexican taking advantage of the dismay of his pursuers, had gained the opposite bank of the ravine, and feeling in apparent safety, had checked the speed of his horse for an instant, when the report of a rifle was heard, and the Mexican tumbling from his saddle, fell on the ground a corpse! The clouds had broken away, and the moon now shone out in all her wonted brilliancy, lighting up the scene around. The Rangers had come up the other side of the ravine. There stood Harding by the side of his noble steed, patting his arched neck, while he gazed with horror at the fearful chasm which he had just leaped, and viewed with wonder the large break in the earth which had given way beneath the hind feet of his horse! Some thirty yards distant lay the body of the Mexican, a victim to Harding's unerring aim. A wild shout arose from the Texans as they discovered with joy their comrade, and the whole command shortly after coming up, the story of the death and Harding's leap, was listened to with wonder and surprise. The Mexican's horse proved to be one long stolen, belonging to the Rangers, which accounted for his speed. The scout was continued, and an attempt made to surprise Canales at the little town of Punta Aguda, but the fox was not to be caught napping. On the return of the Rangers the incidents of the scout were talked over in camp, where mirth and merriment once more held their sway, as the men again lay in groups of indolent ease, and Harding and his gallant steed, *Miles*, became celebrated heroes of the campaign.

PROHIBITIONS.

"Set not your affections on the things of earth," for if you do they will be shaken rudely off, and you will be left to mourn in bitterness, wounded and broken-hearted.

"Lay not up treasures on earth," for if you do you may at the last be a pauper and desolate.

"Put not your trust in man," for if you *do* you'll wish you hadn't.

"Labor not to be rich," "for he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent; and riches profit not in the day of wrath."

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee," or you will die the death of the merciless and the liar.

"Be not wise in thine own eyes"—you will find yourself a fool if you are not careful.

"Envy not thou the oppressor, and choose none of his ways," for to all oppressors there will come a fearful reckoning.

"Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye," unless you want to be "twitted" with his generosity, and your own greediness, as long as you live.

"Remove not old landmarks, and enter not into the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer is mighty. He shall plead their cause with thee."

"Be not among wine bibbers," for you will be apt to catch their wicked ways.

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it and it displease Him," for in that case He may try what misfortune will do for you.

"Lay not in wait against the dwelling of the righteous, spoil not his resting-place; for a just man falleth seven times and riseth up, but when the wicked fall they arise no more."

"Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause." "Lie not with thy lips, for a whisperer separateth chief friends, and lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."

"Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not," for if you forsake one who has been faithful to you, you will yourself be forsaken in your time of need.

"Be not rash with thy mouth, nor let thy heart be hasty," for it is far better not to promise than to promise and not perform.

"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger riseth in the bosom of fools." A. M,

TYRANNY OF EVIL HABITS.—He who has struck his colors to the power of an evil habit, has surrendered himself to an enemy bound by no articles of faith, and from whom he can expect only the vilest treatment.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GEORGE S. N.—You need not read five hundred books to become reasonably well acquainted with the history of the world. Read the historical books of the Bible, Rollin's Ancient History, Goldsmith's History of Greece and Rome, Niebuhr's Rome, Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Hallam's Middle Ages, Alison's History of Europe, Thier's History of the Consulate and the Empire, any good history of England, all the histories of the United States that you can find, Prescott's historical works, Carlyle's Life of Cromwell and his French Revolution, and all the biographies of eminent Americans that you can lay your hands upon.

UNITED STATES.—You can "locate your land warrant," as the saying is, on any unpre-empted lands belonging to the United States government. We do not know to whom the politician referred, or what he meant by the remark you quote. We should not like to attempt to decide what any politician meant by any speech whatever.

WARREN S.—Either let your voice alone, or else consult some one who is skillful in the cultivation of that organ. You have probably injured your voice by overstraining it.

READER.—It is of course impossible for us or any stranger to predict with certainty whether or not you could get a clerkship in some city in the South.

A. F. L.—The back numbers of the LEDGER containing the story of "ORION, THE GOLDBEATER," will cost you fifty-six cents.

HARVY B.—It is not customary for young ladies to send requests to men they have never seen to write to them. In the case referred to by you, your sister's friend might have done it innocently, and on account of the representations and promptings of your sister.

ANTOINETTE.—We do not know when there will be no more believers in fortune-telling—perhaps never. A faith in divination and fatalism can never want converts so long as it affords us a convenient scape-goat for our crimes and follies; and who is there among us that does not lay this flattering unction to his soul whenever his pride or self-conceit is wounded. If we succeed in our undertakings, we very demurely assign the merit to our own talent, prudence, and forethought; if we fail, our bad luck bears all the blame of our bad conduct; we impute our own blindness to Fortune, and even make the heavens responsible if we happen to miss our way upon earth. We cheerfully stand sponsors to our virtues and successes, while we affiliate our vices and disasters upon any one that will father them.

SCHOOL-GIRL.—The renowned Colonel Crockett, or David Crockett, is reported to have been killed by the Spaniards at the Alamo massacre, in Texas, in 1835. We remember reading, years ago, a thrilling account of that infamous butchery, in which it was stated that Crockett and Col. Bowie (who gave its name to the bowie knife) were in a room together, the latter so ill with fever that he could hardly stand, when a whole company of armed Mexican soldiers rushed in upon them. But Crockett and Bowie were not men to be taken by surprise, nor was it possible for them to know fear. Unarmed as they were they rushed upon the assassins, wrenched weapons from their grasp, and succeeded in killing twenty-three of the miscreants before they were overpowered.

THELVING.—Your contrivance for putting fifteen pigs in four pens, and an odd number in each pen, by putting three in one pen, five in another, and seven in another, and then building a fourth pen all around the first three, may pass with some for a solution of the question. But suppose you should keep building pens around each other in that manner until you had built a hundred of them, on the same reasoning you would have fifteen pigs in one hundred pens, and an odd number in each pen; and on the same principle you might extend the number of pens to millions. The thing is absurd on its face.

OTHELLO.—The "fiend in human shape" of whom you speak, was a desperately bad fellow. The obstinate person who refuses to break off the engagement with your sweetheart cannot compel her to marry him. Under the circumstances you have detailed, if they are just as you have stated them, she would be justified in marrying you, and the "obstinate man" could not prevent her doing so. He could sue her for breach of promise, but it is not probable that he would do so, and if he should he would be very apt to get beaten on the trial and have to pay a pretty large bill of costs.

ISADORE.—A man or woman in poor health, or consumptively inclined, has no business to marry; and a girl, who discovers that her lover is thus afflicted, or whose lover becomes thus afflicted after an engagement has been entered into, would be justified in breaking it off. To the unreflecting and the selfish this may seem rather cruel doctrine, but it is not cruel; on the contrary, it is a most merciful and beneficent doctrine. No one has a right, for the purpose of gratifying his or her own selfish desires, to entail disease, suffering, and premature death, upon posterity.

MISUNDERSTANDING.—You should have yielded more gracefully to your wife's desire that your little daughter should have a birth-day party. In all such matters, and indeed in every matter, a man should reflect before committing himself, and then either persistently refuse to grant a request, or else grant it cheerfully and gracefully. A courteous refusal is better than a gruff assent. The latter turns the favor into an unpleasant burden and destroys all the happiness which a loving and generous assent would have bestowed.

WRITER.—The specimens of card-writing you sent us are very fine indeed; but we cannot say whether or not you could earn a livelihood by practicing such card-writing as a regular business. We have heard that persons make good wages at the business, and perhaps you could do the same; and, on the other hand, you might not be able to earn your porridge by such a pursuit. Your success would depend on the agreeableness of your address and manners, and on your business energy and tact.

HAMLET.—To improve your conversational powers you must store your mind with knowledge, and converse as much as possible with superior men and women. Intercourse with accomplished men will impart vigor, depth, and clearness to your thought and expression, while the society of accomplished women will tend to give your conversation vivacity and elegance.

SCHUYLKILL BOATMAN.—Your solution of the "pig problem" is erroneous, or rather it is no solution at all. The conditions of the problem were that fifteen pigs should be put into four pens, an odd number in each pen. You have five pigs each in three pens and fifteen pigs in the fourth pen, which makes thirty pigs in all. So your "pig solution" is all higgledy *piggledy*.

CALVIN POINT.—We think it would be an unusual and very improper thing for a girl to ask her lover, even were they engaged, for money. And should she repeat such an offense, he would be justified in "giving notice of discontinuance." It is bad enough for a man to be teazed for money after he is married.

R., New Lisbon.—A young lady who cannot make up her own mind as to the choice of a husband should not choose one, nor marry until she has "a mind of her own" in regard to the matter. According to your statement, the young lady in question had better not marry either of her suitors.

JENKINS.—You ought to be exceedingly careful about interfering with the quarrels of your neighbors' children. Every man's heart instinctively and instantly swells with indignation whenever his offspring is rudely touched by a stranger's hand.

L. S. L.—There is no "wash" or "compound" which will prevent the hair from growing as low on the forehead and neck as nature intended it to grow, and all tampering with such things is hurtful.

H. H. G.—A benevolent heart is pretty certain to bring its possessor an abundant reward for all his charities. Were we in your place, we would sign the release, and let the poor man go free.

POOR M.—You should break loose from your present sinful bondage without delay. By relying on God for grace and strength you may be able to retrace your steps, and win content if not happiness.

HEALTH AND STRENGTH.—Among the most important things to be practised in order to preserve the health, are cleanliness, abstemiousness, industry and morality.

TENORE.—Edgar A. Poe, the poet and critic, has been dead several years; Rufus W. Griswold died about a year since.

WEST POINT.—We do not see any reason why it should be conceded that a military man should be better able than a civilian to understand Napoleon's career. The man of comprehensive and philosphical mind best understands history and careers. Your views of the matter seem to us to be altogether too rose-colored. We think that any intelligent, thoughtful, and philosophical person who reads the history of those times and of subsequent events, will derive therefrom one leading impression: and that is, the conviction of the overwhelming disparity of means to ends in the great drama of Napoleon's life. What infinite toil and suffering, what carnage, what desolation, what waste of the products of peaceful industry, were occasioned through a long series of years to carry the French eagles to Moscow, that they might be driven back to the capital, and be there trodden under the feet of a barbarian conqueror;—to raise one man to the summit of Imperial ambition, that he might be dashed from his precipitous hight, to dispute and chicane on the rock of St. Helena, to writhe under an ignoble and paltry tyranny, and to die obscurely, the victim of petty vexations, and of hardships that scarcely bear narration! What, on the other hand, did his enemies attain by the success of their arms? The people, a transfer of masters, and perpetuated tyranny!—the combined kings, an uncertain and precarious power, a throne raised with sand over the womb of a volcano! Such are the mysterious, yet the whimsical destinies of man, under European systems. His talents, genius, perseverance, affections, his tears, sweat, and blood, are but as a rattle in the hand of an infant, which is agitated to make the amusement of an idle moment, and is broken to pieces on the first impulse of satiety or caprice.

INQUIRER puts the following case: A gentleman is walking along the street; a sudden storm comes up; the gentleman fortunately has an umbrella; he hoists it and goes on his way; he meets a lady—an utter stranger to him—who has no umbrella, and the question is, Would it be a breach of etiquette for him to *ask the lady to share* his umbrella with him? Yes, it would be a breach of etiquette for him to ask the strange lady *to share* his umbrella with him, and thus impose upon her the necessity of refusing or of walking closely with a man of whose character she knows nothing, or who, for aught she knows, may be the greatest villain in the country. Under such circumstances a man should either relinquish his umbrella to the lady altogether, or else pass her by without notice.

QUESTO E MIO.—The term "cockney," which has come to be used to designate natives of London, or rather those born within the limits of the old city walls, is probably derived from the French, *coquin*, idle; French, *cocagne*, and Italian, *cuccagna*, an imaginary country of idleness and luxury; and hence a person who leads an idle life, or *never leaves the city*. The genuine Cockney is said never to leave the confines of the old city walls of London. Within these limits he is born, and there he lives and dies, profoundly ignorant of all the rest of the world, and feeling a hearty British contempt for all the rest of the world. Your other question we have not the means of answering, and you must excuse us for not hunting up the facts.

V. M.—We think it is seldom, if ever, worth while for a woman to attempt to win back a faithless lover. It is better to let him go. A man who once betrays his trust, is forever after unsafe. Besides, second love is usually better than first love. The latter is almost always founded on ignorance of the character of the person loved, while second love is generally founded on a knowledge of the beloved's nature. First love is apt to be childish and foolish; second love is apt to be sound and wise. We do not mean to be understood as saying, however, that first love is *never* wise, and happy in its results, or that second love is *always* so.

E. X.—Your reasoning is all wrong. In the first place, you should not have disobeyed your mother. In that act of disobedience the whole trouble began. You must now go back to that act and make atonement therefor. That being properly disposed of, the adjustment of subsequent difficulties, and the reconciliation with your parents, will be matters of easy accomplishment. Do not listen any further to advice given by your officious friend. He is *not* a friend to you; we think, from what you have stated, that he is your bitter foe.

REV. C. C. J.—If you will reflect a moment, you will see that the couple are legally wed, although the bridegroom gave you a counterfeit bill for your fee. Your fee, or the payment or non-payment thereof, has nothing to do with the legality of the marriage ceremony. It would be perfectly proper for you to hand the bill back to the giver of it, and ask him for a good one in its place. You had better do this before his honeymoon has been too long past. You must excuse us for not answering the questions concerning our private business.

ROANOKE sends the following peoblem for the LEDGER boys and girls to work out, and he says if any of them can do it, he thinks they will be very smart. We are certain that hundreds of them can solve it in a few moments. The problem is as follows:

"If from a rule that's three feet long,
A shadow five is made,
What is the steeple's hight in feet,
That is ninety *yards* in shade?"

FOND DU LAC.—When the girl took your rival's arm to walk away with him, you should have let them go without molestation. In following after and annoying them you proved yourself to be unworthy of the love or respect of any decent man or woman. Any lady has a right to choose her companions as she pleases, without interference from any quarter outside of her own family or those who happen to be responsible for her conduct and well-being.

SAGINAW.—Your sympathy and indulgence will probably be thrown away upon your Indian neighbors. When a white man has once become accustomed to strong drink and sunk into the degradation of habitual drunkenness, there is but little hope of his ever reassuming the dignity of manhood; and in the case of an Indian drunkard we think there is no ground on which a hope of his reformation could reasonably be based.

R. A. W.—Your initials form a word which pretty fairly describes your poetry. It is decidedly *raw*. The "gentle lady" whom you love better than life, and want to make your wife, that you may remove her from strife, which cuts like a knife; whose beauty is rife, and who sings like a fife, would hardly relish being floated into public notice on your "tide of song;" and on the whole, we cannot "insert the same in the LEDGER, and oblige," &c.

RESTLESS KATY.—In visiting your sick cousin, you should take some friend with you, otherwise some very good people may call you an indiscreet, and even an immodest young lady. Girls cannot be too careful as to their conduct in all such matters, inasmuch as in every neighborhood there are those who delight to interpret a kindly act as a very bad one, and who will strive to extract evil out of the most immaculate goodness.

MARIAN.—We cannot agree with you. We think great men, and men of genius, should be held to as strict an account for their faults, and especially for their evil actions, as people of less note and ability. In fact, they should be held to a stricter account than ordinary people. When a person of eminent renown, or of transcendant genius, perpetrates a wrong, he commits a public injury for which the public should hold him responsible.

STANLEY.—We should not advise a young machinist, or anybody else, to go to Cuba or elsewhere in search of employment. In such matters, a man should not seek the advice of strangers. You would find it greatly to your advantage, should you so inform yourself in regard to your business that you could at all times act from your own knowledge.

DOCTOR.—According to your statement, you had better let the bill go. If you sue the man he will be certain to set up mal-practice on your part as a defense, and the prejudice which the trial would excite against you, would damage you to a much greater amount than that of the bill, even should you win the case. Better give the ungrateful patient a receipt in full, and let him go.

ALBERT.—The fact that your guardian withheld his consent from your marriage makes no difference in its validity; nor does the fact that you were under age when you married, affect it. Your marriage is perfectly legal and binding, no matter what your guardian has said or may hereafter say.

MINERVA.—Taking all the circumstances into consideration, we think you should return the letters. Should you do so, you will be glad of it, every time you think on the subject hereafter. On the other hand, if you retain them they will be a source of constant annoyance.

HENDERSON.—If the lady's husband was dead when you married her, or if she had been divorced from him, your marriage was legal; but if such was not the fact, as your letter would seem to indicate, you are both guilty of bigamy and can be sent to the Penitentiary.

A HUNTER.—We cannot tell you where to apply, or to whom to apply, in order to obtain employment of the American Fur Company. Some branches of their business are undoubtedly very laborious and not unattended with danger.

C. E., No. 3.—We know nothing about the premium of $200 offered by a Southern gentleman for the best essay on "Religion in the Family," except what was stated in a current item in the LEDGER of October 23d.

L.—You can probably find some one who knows the young man, and who would introduce you to him. If you cannot do that, we know not how you can accomplish your object.

H. A. G.—If you are satisfied that the young man is immoral, or keeps bad company, or is getting into bad habits of any kind, you would be justified in breaking off your engagement with him.

SUBSCRIBER.—If you are not of age, your mother can sell your watch and jewelry, if she can get hold of it.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*